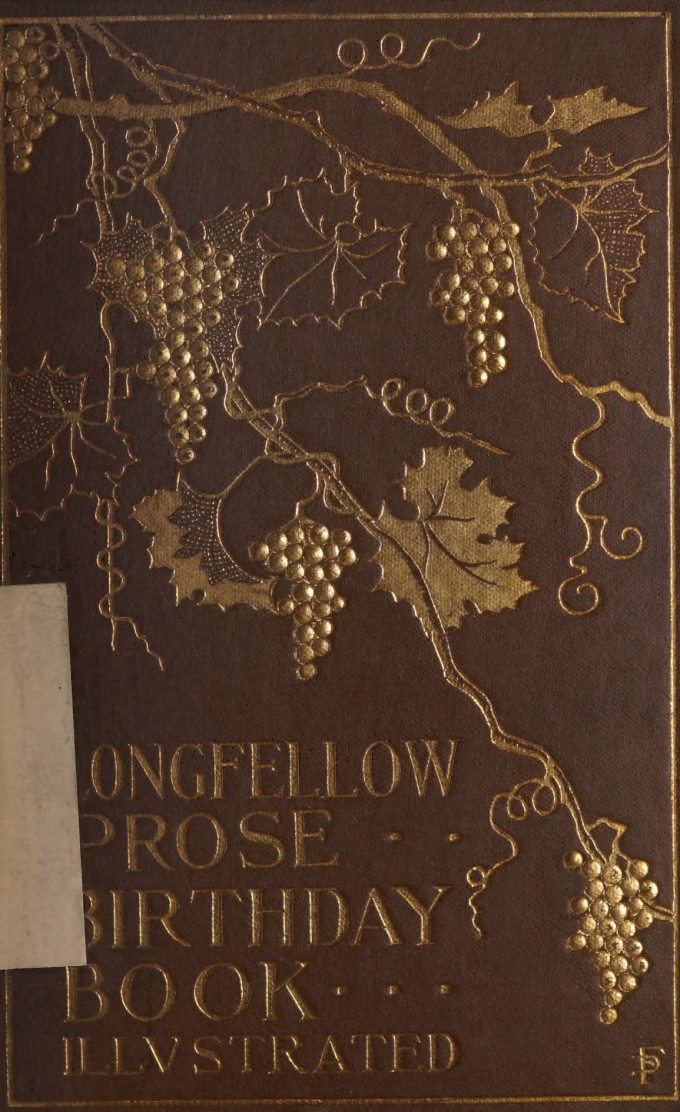
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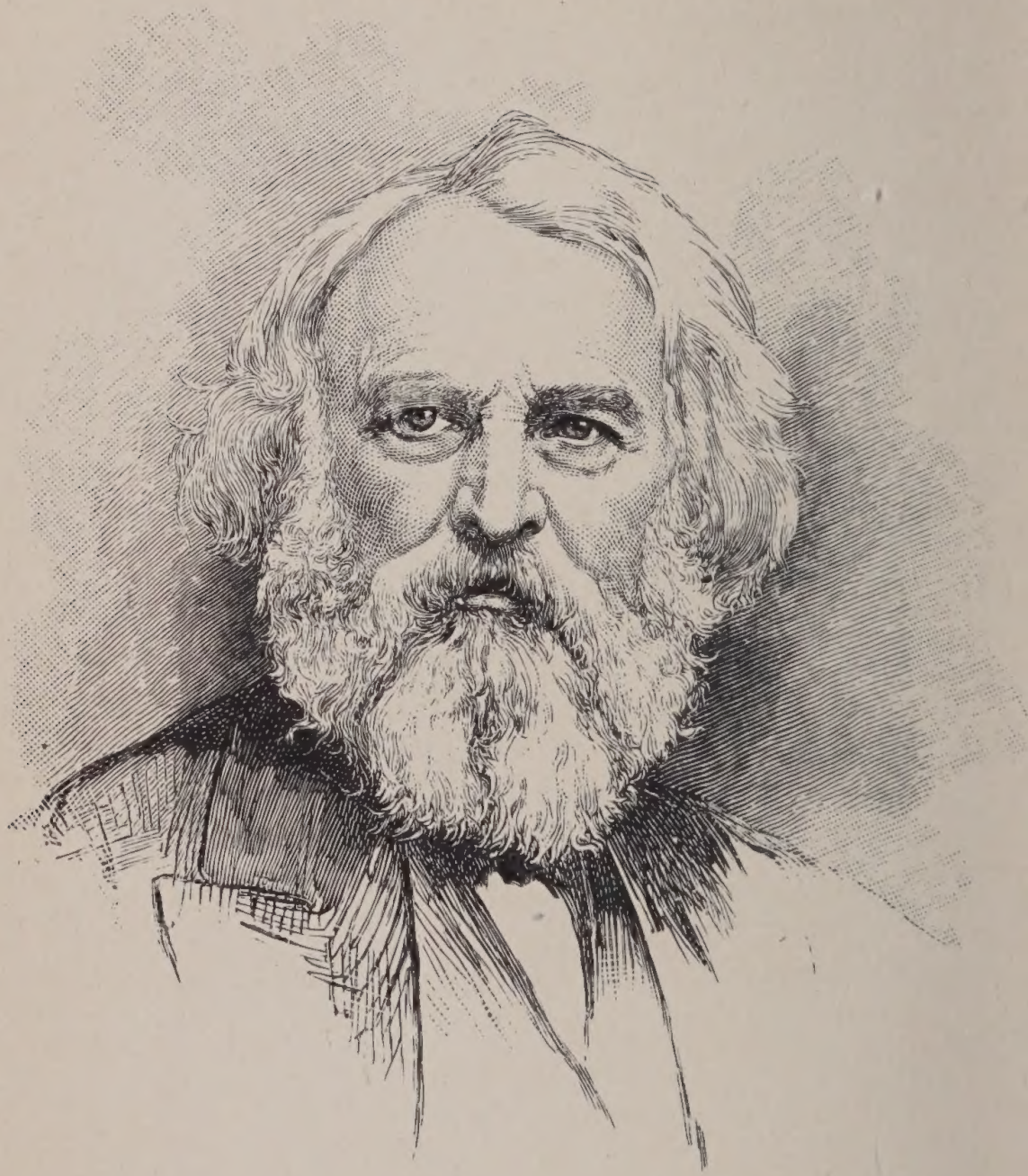

THE LONGFELLOW PROSE BIRTHDAY BOOK

EXTRACTS FROM THE JOURNALS AND LETTERS OF

H. W. LONGFELLOW

EDITED BY

LAURA WINTHROP JOHNSON

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FROM THE PREFACE

TO THE

LIFE OF LONGFELLOW.

THIS is the Life of a man of letters who was a worker, — a faithful user of his powers; one who had too much respect for his art ever to permit any carelessness in the execution or unworthiness in the theme. His art he valued, not for its own sake, but as a vehicle for noble, gentle, beautiful thought and sentiment. If he spoke of things common, it was to invest them with that charm of saying, or show that poetic element in them, which should lift them above the

commonplace. . . . It trusts much to the personal interest which, in this instance, the writings seem in a remarkable degree to have inspired, — an interest which it is believed this book, if it may in some things modify, will in no degree diminish. If in anything it should seem to fall short, let it be remembered that the poet had already put the best of himself into his books.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW, *Frontispiece.*

THE LONGFELLOW HOUSE AT NEWBURY.

THE WADSWORTH HOUSE, HIRAM, ME.

LONGFELLOW'S BIRTHPLACE, PORTLAND.

THE LONGFELLOW HOUSE, PORTLAND.

THE VASSALL-CRAIGIE-LONGFELLOW HOUSE, CAMBRIDGE.

CRAIGIE HOUSE, FROM THE WEST.

CRAIGIE HOUSE, FROM THE NORTH.

VIEW ACROSS THE LAWN, NORTHWEST OF CRAIGIE HOUSE.

VIEW FROM THE REAR PIAZZA, CRAIGIE HOUSE.

THE AVENUE.

THE STUDY, CRAIGIE HOUSE.

IN THE POETS' CORNER, WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

THE LONGFELLOW HOUSE AT NEWBURY.

January

January 1.

A New Year, a new journal, a new swan's quill, and a new start into the California of the future. Shall I find any gold in the Sacramento of Helicon?

I was up at two o'clock this morning. I placed a candle at one window, and looked out of another on the lovely trees, all feathered and plumed with snow. The air was motionless, and in their illumination they looked like one great aerial Christmas-tree.

A great day! The President's Proclamation for Emancipation of Slaves in the rebel States goes into effect. A beautiful day, full of sunshine, ending in a tranquil moonlight night. May it be symbolical of the Emancipation!

January 2.

Bright days, bright nights, — moonlight and snow; innumerable sleighs shooting to and fro. All the trees and the grass gleaming with ice: splendid as Aladdin's palace.

It is, to be sure, a cruel pang; it is one which I feel often, often, — every time I open a page of my own writing. I console myself with thinking — what is very true — that to be fully satisfied with what one has done is but a bad prognostic of what one is going to do. Woe be to you if it were otherwise!

January 1.

January 2.

January 3.

I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Irving in Spain, and found the author, whom I had loved, repeated in the man. The same playful humor, the same touches of sentiment, the same poetic atmosphere; and, what I admired still more, the entire absence of all literary jealousy, of all that mean avarice of fame which counts what is given to another as so much taken from one's self, —

> And rustling hears in every breeze
> The laurels of Miltiades.

January 4.

Like all other people, the traveller has his cares and sorrows. Sometimes he is gay, — at others, sad; sometimes he feels like a bird uncaged, and then again he seems to "drag at each remove a lengthening chain." But, ah me! . . . How many solitary moments a traveller has! There is some truth in Madame de Staël's remark, that "of all the *pleasures* of life, travelling is the *saddest!*"

January 3.

January 4.

January 5.

Lowell gave a supper to Thackeray. We sat down at ten and did not leave the table till one. Very gay, with stories and jokes: —

"Will you take some Port?" said Lowell to Thackeray.

"I dare drink anything that becomes a man."

"It will be a long while before that becomes a man."

"Oh no," cried Felton, "it is *fast turning into* one."

January 6.

A child's party. Beautiful little girls, — graceful, hopeful; awkward boys in their gosling age, green and gawky.

I breathe more freely, now that the appointed task is done. I play the part of an unstrung bow for a while; let the mind lie awhile in the rain and sunshine of heaven, unvexed by laborious ploughshare.

I assure you that, by every language you learn, a new world is opened before you. It is like being born again; and new ideas break upon the mind with all the freshness and delight with which we may suppose the first dawn of intellect to be accompanied.

January 5.

January 6.

January 7.

I regard the profession of a teacher in a far more noble and elevated point of view than many do. I cannot help believing that he who bends in a right direction the pliant disposition of the young, and trains up the ductile mind to a vigorous and healthy growth, does something for the welfare of his country and something for the great interests of humanity.

January 8.

It is this *religious* feeling — this changing of the finite for the infinite, this constant grasping after the invisible things of another and a higher world — which marks the spirit of modern literature. The ancients, it is true, dreamed of an immortality; but their heaven was an earthly heaven, and the eye could take in at a glance the sensuous paradise of the Elysian Fields, where the prerogative of the soul is not that it should grow better, but that it should merely live longer. But to the modern poet the world beyond the grave presents itself with all the force of reality, and yet with all the mystery of a dream. It is a glorious certainty to some, an appalling certainty to others. Thitherward the confiding spirit turns, as to "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land;" or, fearing, trembling, doubting, shrinks back and yet aspires, denies and yet believes.

January 7.

January 8.

January 9.

For my own part, I lead a somewhat studious life, and take long solitary walks through the green fields and woodlands of this fair neighborhood. Yesterday I was at Mount Auburn, and saw my own grave dug; that is, my own tomb. I assure you, I looked quietly down into it, without one feeling of dread. It is a beautiful spot.

In the intellectual world, as in the physical, the rays that give light are not those that give heat.

January 10.

Sat in my chamber, cold and cheerless. The fire would not burn; and I could not write. Thought seemed to freeze in my inkstand. Now let me try, — the evening having come and the tall candles being lighted.

It seems to me the world is growing amazingly dull. Books, books, books! No lively intercourse; all the world asleep. But Sumner will be back in a few days [from Europe]; and we shall be kindled, — literally set fire to.

A man of real talent and love of literature may live a long life with a longing desire to do something great, and then "die and make no sign."

January 9.

January 10.

January 11.

Gone, and left no trace. I grow weary of doing nothing, and grow impatient. How horrible it must be to rust, as in prison!

I think it improves an Italian amazingly to breathe the air of England or America. If a blast or two of the North had breathed through the soul of Pellico and aired his sentimentality, he would never have written that soft, sweet book. There would have been some thunder, and not all tears.

January 12.

What a beautiful thing is silence! and yet one may carry it a great deal too far. For instance, I have not yet answered your Christmas greeting, and it is past Twelfth-night! I will not wish you a happy New Year; only a *happier* one. That, I am sure, is possible; and from the depth of my heart I wish it may be yours.

And now good-night; and may the good physician Sleep comfort and console you. But such a sunrise as I saw two days ago was better than sleep to me!

January 11.

January 12.

January 13.

I have a mighty cold, and think I will stay at home, for there is a tremendous wind blowing; and through the bare trees it sounds like the wind at sea. Moped and mowed the day through.

An Italian beggar with his boy, speaking an almost unintelligible dialect. Rough work in such rough weather, for children of the South to wade through New England snows.

How this neuralgia haunts me! Great tides of pain go ebbing and flowing among the piers of the teeth perpetually. The winds are cold and raw, and altogether it is a very uncomfortable and unsatisfactory state of things. Ah, me! what things these nerves are, when they get jangled and tangled.

January 14.

What fools some critics make of themselves by insisting that Dante ought to keep himself up to his highest level. As if he did not know best what he was about. Sometimes the sock, sometimes the buskin; the final result a real *commedia*. Some critics are like a fly bumping his head against a window, through which the bright light streams, and exhibits the darkness and littleness of the fly.

January 13.

January 14.

January 15.

In the "Magnalia Christi," by Cotton Mather, there is an account of a vessel, belonging to New Haven, which had been lost sight of for many months. So deeply did the uncertainty as to her fate prey upon the inhabitants that prayers were offered up in church on Sunday that the Almighty would at all events reveal what had been the fate of the vessel and her crew. The following morning the long-missed ship was seen standing into the harbor. At a certain point it seemed to the multitude whom the glad news had brought to the wharves, to be suddenly taken aback; her foremast broke, down went the main and mizzen masts, and the hull heeled over and sank. The stirring description in old Mather's chronicle will rouse you amazingly. The preacher in his pulpit, the excited earnestness of the congregation, the phantom bark appearing and enacting the dreadful shipwreck.

January 16.

What strange trumps turn up, as time shuffles the cards!

It is so pleasant to make plans, and then not carry them out! You have only to sit still and imagine the thing done, and it is done, without fatigue or expense.

January 15.

January 16.

January 17.

Apropos of 'Excelsior,' an aunt of mine professed that it reminded her of a story she once read. An aeronaut was preparing for his ascent, when a stranger presented himself and offered to accompany him. He appeared so interested, and so sure of his courage for the undertaking, that the aeronaut consented. After they had risen many thousand feet, he remarked that they were over the town of Hexenheim. "Throw out more ballast," cried the stranger, "go higher; they have sharp eyes in Hexenheim." "Where?" inquired the astonished aeronaut. "In the madhouse," replied his *compagnon-de-voyage*, and kept throwing out bag after bag, crying out, "Higher; higher!" Finally he rose and threw the aeronaut out of the car, having first inquired if he had any wives and children. "I," said the madman, "have 300 wives and 7,000 children in the stars; so bundle out, for I must get there." *Excelsior!*

January 18.

After all, I pray a benediction on *drudgery*. It occupies my thoughts and takes the fever out of my blood and keeps me from moping too much. But the time speeds away almost too fast. I cannot say to the passing moment, "Stay, thou art so fair;" but I say, "Drive not too fast, O Time!"

January 17.

January 18.

January 19.

There is such a social spirit here and in Boston that I seldom see a book by candle-light. Indeed, I pass half of my evenings, at least, in society, — it being almost impossible to avoid it.

So, you perceive, I take things very easily. People here are too agreeable to let a man kill himself with study.

The character of Christ is wonderful, even if looked upon as a mere human character. Wherever touched, sweet and refreshing waters flow therefrom, — words that encourage, deeds that cheer and make us hopeful, trustful.

January 20.

This dull, dismal cold crushes me down, as if the sky were falling; or as if I were one of the four dwarfs of the Northern mythology, who uphold the dome of heaven upon their shoulders.

Shall there be no repose in literature? Shall every author be like a gladiator with swollen veins and distended nostrils, as if each encounter was for life or death?

The breath of an audience is very apt to blow one's thoughts quite away, as a gust through an open window does the loose papers on a table.

January 19.

January 20.

January 21.

A delicious day. The great icy hand begins to relax its grasp.

A January thaw, the real liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius.

A softer gleam of sunshine across the marshes and on the Brighton hills. Not a breath of wind. The brown leafless branches all at rest. A day of quiet and seclusion.

I cannot tell you how often we walk together through these scenes, and how I long to see you again. There are so many things to recall the absent, — the fragrance of a flower, a strain of music, a casual resemblance in voice, manner, or feature; in fine, a thousand little things without a name, which suddenly startle me from my dream and make my pulses beat quicker.

January 22.

Went to the Episcopal church. From our gate to the portals of this church the path was better trodden in the old English days of the Vassalls. There is something august in this service, which has been repeated for so many centuries in so many churches. But what a running commentary on this holy Liturgy have been the politics of England and the lives of its monarchs.

January 21.

January 22.

January 23.

A lovely morning; the warm sun shining through a soft haze.

The hoar frost, the haze, the genial sun, — all are beautiful.

I say it with deep humiliation and grief, the American character seems often wanting in many of the more generous and lofty traits which ennoble humanity.

January 24.

Read five cantos in Dante's *Inferno*. I am struck with the prevailing desire of *fame* everywhere heard. Above the wailings of the damned spirits, the groaning branches of the accursed forest, the hollow roar of the falling Phlegethon, the shrieks, curses, and howlings of despair, — resounds the "silver-snarling" blast of "the trumpet that speaks of fame." This was the longing in the soul of Dante, finding its expression everywhere. "See that thou speakest of us to the people," cry the souls in agony. "Their fame — *fama di loro;*" "leaving behind them horrible dispraise;" "that fame of yours — *vostra nominanza;*" these and the like are phrases constantly recurring, like the theme of an opera, with thousand-fold variations. I know of no book so fearfully expressive of human passions as this.

January 23.

January 24.

January 25.

What a glorious poem is 'The Tempest!'— hardly a play, for its dramatic interest is its least interest. It is an emblem of the power of mind over matter. Ariel is an embodied thought projected from Prospero, obeying his will, subduing and controlling the elements. It is the apotheosis of intellect. The poet's hand here sweeps the whole harp of human life, from Ariel to Caliban, the great bass string.

What a beautiful word is *arroyuelo*, the Spanish for brooklet! How it sings and gurgles along, like water over pebbles, with its liquid syllables!

January 26.

Warmer. A vapor fills the air. There is not a breath of wind, and all the trees — every branch and minutest twig — covered with soft, feathery snow. A beautiful winter's day.

I like these brumal days. They are full of souvenirs of Europe; particularly of Germany, where I twice travelled in winter.

Time speeds away, and with these dim eyes I accomplish little. "Oh, give me light!"

January 25.

January 26.

January 27.

I said to myself this morning, as I rose and saw "the imprisoning rain," To-day at least I have leisure, and will give it to my Romance. But, as has often happened to me on such occasions, I passed the morning in listless inactivity, and my mind said, "To-day is holiday and I will not work; get you another slave."

January 28.

Another of Emerson's wonderful lectures. The subject, 'Inspiration;' the lecture itself an illustration of the theme. Emerson is like a beautiful portico, in a lovely scene of nature. We stand expectant, waiting for the High-Priest to come forth; and lo, there comes a gentle wind from the portal, swelling and subsiding; and the blossoms and the vine-leaves shake, and far away down the green fields the grasses bend and wave; and we ask, "When will the High-Priest come forth and reveal to us the truth?" and the disciples say, "He has already gone forth, and is yonder in the meadows." "And the truth he was to reveal?" "It is Nature; nothing more."

January 27.

January 28.

January 29.

A day of almost incredible beauty, sunny and warm and sweet. The birds are singing; but I cannot even do that, so beautiful is the day. The evening filled with calls from young collegians and others.

A bright, beautiful morning, — a kind of promise of spring; the weather which Dante alludes to as deceiving the blackbirds, making them think that winter is over, —

Come fa 'l merlo per poca bonaccia.

In Lombardy the last three days of January are still called *I giorni della merla*.[1]

[1] Blackbirds' days.

January 30.

What strange weather! It has given me a headache, with my eye-sight swimming all abroad, and my thoughts hanging suspended in a gloomy brain, like impending snows that fill the air but will not fall.

Very cold; chilling body and soul. I sat by the fire wondering how the old Icelandic Scalds could sing at all. No wonder that their stricken faculties uttered themselves in such broken accents, such glacial metres, such abrupt and jagged songs!

Bitter cold; six degrees below zero. What a foe to civilization such cold weather is! Who wants to shave, or dress, or be elegant, in such weather? One feels like a Laplander.

January 29.

January 30.

January 31.

Last night those thermometers which are in the habit of keeping low company went down to ten and even eighteen degrees below zero.

Imprisoned here, but without a desire to go out into the dismal snow. Only deep longings for Italy, and villas by the margin of lakes, and walks under chestnut trees, and windows in cities looking out upon sunny squares. This comes of reading letters from Italy.

The character of Christ is wonderful, even if looked upon as a mere human character. Wherever touched, sweet and refreshing waters flow therefrom, — words that encourage, deeds that cheer and make us hopeful, trustful.

January 31.

THE WADSWORTH HOUSE, HIRAM, ME.

February

February 1.

This is a lovely winter morning. I cannot tire looking out of the window at the brown branches against the colorless gray sky. The air is windless, and the snow falling gently; the nearest glimpse we can have of *creation*, the beautiful something that comes from nothing, — the crystallization of air!

A wonderful winter day: the air soft and windless; thermometer at 60°; the river at its best and fullest, as in an Indian summer.

February 2.

I am at this moment paying the penalty of exposure to the bitter wind. It has pierced me with a thousand spears, dried up my lungs, and parched my throat. Talk of the east wind! It is a benediction compared with this west wind out there now, howling like a wolf, — though, come to think of it, I never heard a wolf howl, only a dog.

If you want to enliven a dull dinner table you have only to ask the question, "To which century does the year 1800 belong?" I tried it to-day with success.

February 1.

February 2.

February 3.

All authors have some very judicious friends, who are fearful they will get more than their due; and when they see the measure of applause heaped and running over, dexterously sweep it down to a level.

There are conversations which make us suddenly old, or rather, by which we discover ourselves to have moved onward, far onward. Where we played in sunshine, we sit in shadow. There are revelations made in moments of intimacy which show us how great the changes of life are, — flashes of lightning revealing to careless travellers the precipice upon whose brink they stand.

February 4.

The years come when the mind, like an old mill, ceases to grind; when weeds grow on the wall; and through every crack and leak in dam and sluice, spouts the useless water.

Do the white marbles in churchyards mean that the day of death has been marked by a white stone?

February 3.

February 4.

February 5.

Cold, hard, and steel-bright. I can hardly hold a pen to write. Thermometer here in my study only 58° with a fire. And I have so many letters to answer!

Newspapers take up much time, — too much by a great deal; but one can hardly help it now when any moment may bring the greatest tidings.

Read the inevitable newspapers, hoping for something, longing for something; finding nothing.

February 6.

In the evening a great fire in Boston, flushing the whole heavens. A wonderful scene from the windows. The sheeted snow, and lights from houses gleaming through the red flush of the air; the wind blowing like a trumpet.

February 5.

February 6.

February 7.

Here in Rome the windows look across the Campagna to the Alban hills. In front we have all Rome, unrolled like a panorama, and crowned by St. Peter's. But with all this, I find Rome very depressing. It is a death-in-life incredible, surprising beyond description, — a beleaguered city, bombarded by public opinion and the new ideas; still holding out, ringing its alarm bells and living on old shoes. It is quite unchanged since you and I were here forty years ago. I said so to Cardinal Antonelli the other day; and he answered, taking a pinch of snuff, "Yes, thank God!"

February 8.

But, there is something in the ruins of Old Rome which is grand and beautiful beyond conception; and the effect produced on you is almost delirious. I do not believe there is a finer view in the world than that from the eastern gate of the city, embracing the Campagna, with its ruined aqueducts diverging in long broken arcades, and terminated by the sweep of the Albanian hills, sprinkled with their white villages, and celebrated in song and story! But the great charm of the scene springs from association; and though everything in Italy is really picturesque, yet strip the country of its historic recollections, — think merely of what it is, and not of what it has been, — and you will find the dream to be fading away.

February 7.

February 8.

February 9.

Yesterday I dined with the Dominican friars at their convent of San Clemente. Archbishop Manning was there, and the chief of the Sant' Offizio, whose name I do not remember. We had a jovial dinner, and good wine, and every dish Italian, not to say *Italianissimo*. After dinner, we went into a small coffee-room, where the inquisitor tried to light a fire, with small success. Some one cried out, "Ah, Padre! the days have gone by, when fires can be lighted by inquisitors!" and there was a great roar of laughter, in which the Padre aforesaid joined heartily.

February 10.

I have a most voracious appetite for knowledge. To its acquisition I will sacrifice everything. . . . Nothing delights me more than reading and writing. And nothing could induce me to relinquish the pleasures of literature, little as I have yet tasted them. Whatever I do study ought to be engaged in with all my soul, — for I *will be eminent* in something.

February 9.

February 10.

February 11.

The world is blocked up with snow. No such storm for twenty-five years, say the old wise men. We have a lively notion of the Arctic Seas. I feel sometimes as if the house were a ship frozen in the ice, and that a thaw will come and we shall drift away southward. It is quite wretched and unhomelike. It seems to me that I am somebody else, living somewhere else and doing something else.

Tasted the sweet luxury of sitting all day by the fireside and hearing some one read.

February 12.

In old age our bodies are worn-out instruments, on which the soul tries in vain to play the melodies of youth. But because the instrument has lost its strings, or is out of tune, it does not follow that the musician has lost his skill.

So innate and strong is the love of liberty in all human hearts that, even against our better judgment, we instinctively sympathize with criminals escaping from prison.

February 11.

February 12.

February 13.

Resumed my morning walks, after the long snow blockade. Was out by half-past six, the moon shining; in the east just an explosion of light through broken clouds.

Another day absorbed in the college. But why complain? These golden days are driven like nails into the fabric. Who knows but they help it to hold fast and firm?

February 14.

A delicious, spring-like day. I am writing with open window, and wondering whether it is as warm with you.

I feel like a boy with a guinea. I want to spend it, and to keep it, both. Keep it I cannot. In what way shall I spend it?

A walk at sunset with a Dane, who is lost in admiration at the beauty of the sky, the golden light and purple shadows, of our winter sunsets.

February 13.

February 14.

February 15.

In the afternoon I drove to Fresh Pond to see the ice-cutting. The horses passing up and down among the pines; the green gloom above, the white snow beneath; the men on the lake; the square blocks of ice sliding along their canal, then borne up through the trees to descend the inclined plane on iron grooves into the great ice-houses, — the whole was indeed very striking.

A splendid night; bright as day; the ice sparkling and flashing in the moonlight.

February 16.

While steamboats and locomotives traverse field and flood with the speed of light, there are, alas! none on the great streams of thought and the vast fields of learning. Almost single-handed must we breast the stream, and over stocks and stones travel on — on foot. So that the labor of weeks is sometimes necessary for the production of a lecture, which can be delivered in the short space of an hour.

February 15.

February 16.

February 17.

What is *Autobi*ography? What biography *ought to be.*

Human life is made up mostly of a series of little disappointments and little pleasures. The great wonder-flowers bloom but once in a lifetime; as marriage and death.

Truths that startled the generation in which they were first announced become in the next age the commonplaces of conversation; as the famous airs of operas which thrilled the first audiences come to be played on hand-organs in the streets.

February 18.

I have opened for you the gateway into this great churchyard — this God's-acre — of the Italian Poets. I have pointed out to you its principal monuments, have read the names, the dates, and the inscriptions upon them. Perhaps I might have found less to praise and more to blame, if I had endeavored to do so; for in poetry as in religion "many are called but few are chosen." But I have a natural antipathy to that censorious criticism which seeks for defects rather than excellences. And, moreover, I have a strong predilection for the Italians. I love the skies above their heads and the ground beneath their feet! Particularly at this moment, in the hour of their tribulation and anguish.

February 17.

February 18.

February 19.

I should fail were I to attempt to convey in words the thousand charms of the Italian landscape and climate. Rome, Naples, Sorrento, Florence, Genoa, Venice; the Tiber, the Po, the Arno; the Alps, the Apennines, — these are all names to conjure by. The mind resolutely refuses to associate anything disagreeable with Italy. Horace, in his Ode to Thaliarchus, may speak of winter firesides and Soracte white with snow, — but the imagination is not chilled. Dante may speak of the snow and sleet of the Apennines, blown on and beaten by the Sclavonian winds, — but our fancy does not feel them. Returning travellers may tell us of the wintry rain in Rome for weeks and days together, — but our enthusiasm is not damped. To the imagination, Italy always has been, and always will be, the land of the sun, and the land of song. And neither tempest, rain, nor snow will ever chill the glow of enthusiasm that the name of Italy excites in every poetic mind. Say what ill of it you may; it still remains to the poet the land of his predilection, to the artist the land of his necessity, and to all the land of dreams and visions of delight.

February 20.

I live in a great house which looks like an Italian villa, have two large rooms opening into each other. They were once General Washington's chambers.

February 19.

February 20.

February 21.

I have taken up my abode in Cambridge. My chambers are very pleasant, with great trees in front, whose branches almost touch my windows; so that I have a nest not unlike the birds, being high up in the third story. . . . My life here is very quiet and agreeable. Like the clown in Shakespeare, I have "no enemy but winter and rough weather." I wish never a worse one.

There are but few thinkers in the world, but a great many people who think they think.

It is curious how —— always says the same things. His conversation seems stereotyped; one would think he had got it by heart: English society, how pleasant it is; how narrow-minded the Bostonians are; how they quarrel about a man's opinions; — and so forth, and so on.

February 22.

I like all kinds of weather, except cold weather.

A day of disagreeable sensations, Washington's birthday though it be. A northwest wind blowing, and dust flying.

Ah me! how many things there are to meditate upon in this great world! And all this meditation, — of what avail is it, if it does not end in some action?

February 21.

February 22.

February 23.

Shrouded in a cold, which covers me like a monk's hood. I am confident it is often sheer laziness, when a poet refrains from writing because he is "not in the mood." Until he begins he can hardly know whether he is in the mood or not. It is reluctance to the manual labor of recording one's thoughts; perhaps to the mental labor of setting them in due order.

I have endeavored to show among other things, that through the darkness and corruption of the Middle Ages ran a bright, deep stream of Faith, strong enough for all the exigencies of life and death.

February 24.

The grand event of the century — the Anti-Slavery Enactment — has been as silent as the daybreak, or the coming of a new year. And yet this year will always be the Year of Jubilee in our history.

Professor Nichol dined with us. Evening, his second lecture, with its immense and awful ideas of space, which no man's brain can sound. Then to the Observatory to see Orion and his nebula. It is a curious effect of looking through the telescope to make one feel warm in a cold night; that is, to forget the body wholly. The soul seems to assert its supremacy and to walk among the stars.

February 23.

February 24.

February 25.

The happy should not insist too much upon their happiness in the presence of the unhappy.

This government must not pass laws that outrage the sense of right in the community.

Your imagination can readily picture the miseries of a traveller at this season of the year. Italy's eternal summer blooms only in song.

February 26.

The ball was to me a heavy business. Not as of old. The lights seemed dimmer, the music sadder, the flowers fewer, and the women less fair. A moonlight drive home alone, through the frosty air.

All beginnings have something difficult, not to say distasteful, about them. I am always afraid of leaving the most important thing unsaid.

February 25.

February 26.

February 27.

My birthday, the forty-first. Another notch cut in the stick; another date carried higher up on the face of the adamantine rock. And so the years go by; the footsteps of Fate, — the approaching tread of the stone statue!

My birthday. I am now enrolled in the forty-seventh regiment. I am curious to know what poetic victories, if any, will be won this year. In that direction lie my hopes and wishes; nay, my ardent longings.

My forty-eighth birthday. I feel like an old swallow with my nest close up under the roof of the old barn; but hope to sing a little longer.

If we counted birthdays as the Germans do weddings, this would be my golden birthday. To-day I sail into longitude 50°. Half a century old!

My sixty-seventh birthday. These milestones are so many that they begin to look like a graveyard.

February 28.

The last day of February. Waded to church through snow and water ankle-deep. The remainder of the day, was warmly housed, save a walk on the piazza.

I keep mostly in-doors, translating. Snow-drifts are piled about, and the month ends with the blast of windy trumpets over the chimney-tops, — melancholy enough to a melancholy man.

February 27.

February 28.

February 29.

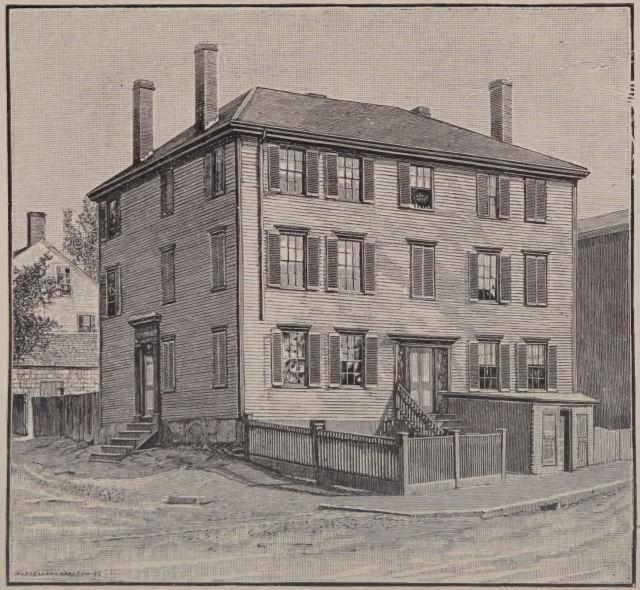
The end of the little month, shorter than his brothers, as if he had no heels to his boots. Farewell, little fellow!

I cannot be so prodigal of my sighs and tears, and the daffy-down-dilly style which makes some writers so touching and pathetic.

I cannot tell you how often we walk together through these scenes, and how I long to see you again. There are so many things to recall the absent, — the fragrance of a flower, a strain of music, a casual resemblance in voice, manner, or feature; in fine, a thousand little things without a name, which suddenly startle me from my dream and make my pulses beat quicker.

You can then do as I do, — mark the books you think you want, close the Catalogue, and forget all about it. To imagine you have bought the books is, in nine cases out of ten, as good as buying them. Such is my philosophy at the age of threescore years and ten, save one. I am startled to think how old I am, and cannot believe it. There must be a mistake. My birthday was a very pleasant one; I am surrounded with flowers as if I were going to be married, or buried.

February 29.



LONGFELLOW'S BIRTHPLACE, PORTLAND.

March

March 1.

March begins with Ash Wednesday; and the day seems clothed in sackcloth and ashes, so gray is it everywhere. Winter has come back upon us like Napoleon from Elba; but I hope not for a hundred days. We are beleaguered by snow storms and shut up in our castles.

A cheerless, gray March day,—the streets flooded with snow and water. Only one level gleam at sunset lit up the landscape for a moment.

March 2.

To-day I heard the song of the blue-bird, the herald of spring. It is exquisite music to my ear. It announces the approach of Nature's great procession of grass, leaves, flowers, and waving cornfields. The spring, the spring, the ever beautiful! with its rushing waters, and floating clouds like thistle-down, and buds whose pale parting lips prophesy delight and love.

March 1.

March 2.

March 3.

A snow-storm. Good for writing letters. I have too many to write. Sometimes a single mail brings me fifteen. My time is taken up in answering them. I no sooner sit down to meditate upon something I have in mind, than I am haunted by the spectre of some unanswered letter, and start up, exclaiming: "Ha, ha, boy! say'st thou so? Art thou there, truepenny?"

March 4.

I like to go to the mouth of the Charles and see the tide-waters spreading out sea-like, flashing, and freshening the air. Then, I walk with the sun at my back; and when he sets, return with all the glory full upon me.

Love makes its record upon our hearts in deeper and deeper colors as we grow out of childhood into manhood; as the Emperors signed their names in green ink when under age, but when of age, in purple.

March 3.

March 4.

March 5.

A west wind, so sharp that it seems as if all the Indians beyond the Mississippi were throwing their tomahawks this way.

There are many landscapes which fascinate us at first sight, and suggest a long stay, a lifelong sojourn: causing us to say, "It is good for us to be here; let us build."

March 6.

To town to see piano-fortes. Think of buying, so that my fingers may serve as lightning-rods, and draw off from my brain and heart the superfluous electricity.

I always stop on the bridge; tide-waters are beautiful. From the ocean up into the land they go, like messengers, to ask why the tribute has not been paid. The brooks and rivers answer that there has been little harvest of snow and rain this year. Floating sea-weed and kelp is carried up into the meadows, as returning sailors bring oranges in bandanna handkerchiefs to friends in the country.

March 5.

March 6.

March 7.

In childhood all unaccustomed things fascinate us; but there comes a period in our lives when the unusual is disagreeable and burdensome.

The imagination walks bravest, not in clouds, but on the firm green earth. It conquers worlds by the sinewy arms of thoughts that have been trained by sage reason and common-sense, — as Alexander conquered Asia with troops which his father Philip had disciplined.

March 8.

Youth wrenches the sceptre from old age, and sets the crown on its own head before it is entitled to it.

Every man is in some sort a failure to himself. No one ever reaches the heights to which he aspires.

March 7.

March 8.

March 9.

Travelling has its joys for him whose heart can whirl away in the sweep of life and the eddies of the world, like a bubble catching a thousand different hues from the sun; but happier is he whose heart rides quietly at anchor in the peaceful haven of home.

Velocity and weight make the momentum of mind as well as of matter. Velocity without weight is a melancholy condition of the human brain.

March 10.

I hate over-early rising. Breakfast at six is intolerable. The great red sun looked through the window curtain and seemed to say, "Come on, my little man, the day is ours!" I have been bewildered all day, and am now as sleepy as a child. A benediction on such early rising! It needs one. Shall I have no more glorious midnights? Shall I creep to bed at nine stuffed with daylight, like a drowsy peasant "*stuffed* with distressful bread"?

March 9.

March 10.

March 11.

Did you ever notice the beautiful and endless aspiration so artistically and silently suggested by Dante in closing each part of his poem with the word *stelle?* Did any Italian commentator ever find it out? Among English translators, I believe Cayley was the first to remark it.

The difficulty of translation lies chiefly in the *color* of words. Is the Italian "ruscelletto gorgoglioso" fully rendered by "gurgling brooklet"? Or the Spanish "pájaros vocingleros" by "garrulous birds"? Something seems wanting. Perhaps it is only the fascination of foreign and unfamiliar sounds; and to the Italian or Spanish ear the English words may seem equally beautiful.

March 12.

Letters, letters, letters; and the whole day consumed with the business of other people. Good people, sweet people, have mercy!

How different from this gossip is the divine Dante, with which I begin the morning! I write a few lines every day before breakfast. It is the first thing I do,—the morning prayer, the key-note of the day. . . . I really have but a few moments to devote to it daily; yet daily a stone, small or great, is laid upon the pile.

March 11.

March 12.

March 13.

Portland. In the chamber where I last took leave of her lay my mother, to welcome and take leave of me no more. I sat all that night alone with her, — without terror, almost without sorrow, so tranquil had been her death. A sense of peace came over me, as if there had been no shock or jar in nature, but a harmonious close to a long life.

A gloomy day. The snow falling fast, and people coming and going on sad errands. I helped to place the body in its coffin, and looked for the last time on the mild, sweet face of my mother.

The friends; the funeral; and afterwards the sitting together of us children in the chamber, out of which our mother seemed only to have passed for a moment into another room. It is ended.

March 14.

At last the winter is gone, with all its gloom and all its splendor, which have been about equally mingled. For my own part, I am delighted to hear the birds again. Spring always reminds me of the *Palingenesis*, or re-creation, of the old alchemists, who believed that *form* is indestructible, and that out of the ashes of a rose the rose itself could be reconstructed, — if they could only discover the great secret of Nature. It is done every spring beneath our windows and before our eyes; and is always so wonderful and so beautiful!

March 13.

March 14.

March 15.

I like to read dictionaries. Some words have a perfume about them like flowers. Others are quaint and pleasing to the eye, like the fantastic gables of an old house.

All books on Italy make me restless. I long to be there, yet doubt and hesitate. Can I find again my lost Italy?

I do not like to have woman discussed in public. Something within me rebels at the profanation.

March 16.

At a ball. Pleasant, and a little sad; reminding one of the past, — and exhibiting the Past seated all round the walls, while the Present danced in the middle.

At nine, drive into town to a dancing-party, very elegant and pleasant, except the fading away of the people one meets from year to year, and the notches made by Time with his scythe. The eye a little dimmer, the mouth a little sadder; or, if not sadder, more pathetic.

March 15.

March 16.

March 17.

Pleasant, with vapors in the air. A little bird singing, querulous, forlorn. This is the second I have heard this year. Poor thing! poor pioneer and backwoodsman! what do you think of those patches of snow, — those milk-stains and flecks on the brown meadow-grass?

March 18

Tremendous snow-storm. Shut up all day. Through the gusts of the mighty north wind and the snow, the church bells seemed to cry for help. Winter has come back for his umbrella. Begone, old man, and wag not thy hoary beard at me!

The ground is white with snow, the thermometer at freezing, the wind northeast, and a sleety rain falling.

March 17.

March 18.

March 19.

We joined in the concert by playing a sonata arranged for four hands, by Hoyle; a fine piece of music, with *trump-it obbligato*. Do you know it?

A chill March morning; the frozen earth half-covered with snow looks like a brown-faced beggar in a tattered shirt. In the evening we read Milton's 'Comus,' flashing with all its gems, unnaturally bright.

March 20.

As I walked out over the bridge, the rising moon shone through the misty air. The reflection of the stars in the dark water looked like sparks of fire. Stood still to hear the soft sound of the dissolving ice-cakes in the brine, — a low and musical sound, a gentle simmering like the foaming of champagne.

March 19.

March 20.

March 21.

We have such a celestial day that I am enjoying it by the open window. The blue river runs in front, and the wind roars loud in the trees, and it is all spring-like. We deserve this for the purgatory of snow, mud, and rain we have just passed through.

I cannot sit at home. Spring is no time to read books. Out, out into the free air, ye bookworms; revel in the sunshine, and thank God for the spring!

March 22.

We have had soft, summer-like weather. The blue-birds begin to sing, and the south wind blows. But to-day is a wild, untamed Orson of a day, — cold and surly. The canker-worms have begun their journey up the trees, and to-morrow I shall *tar*. I hope to abate this nuisance. The fine old elms in front of the house were attacked by canker-worms, which, after having devoured the leaves, came spinning down in myriads. Mrs. Craigie used to sit by the open windows and let them crawl over her white turban unmolested. She would have nothing done to protect the trees from these worms; she used to say, "Why, sir, they are our fellow-worms; they have as good a right to live as we have."

March 21.

March 22.

March 23.

It is a bright, breezy March day. The trees and the meadows look russet, and the river blue. Everything is clothed with sunshine, and a quarter's salary due on Monday. I am consequently in very good spirits, and begin the new term under good auspices. I hope I shall be a better home-correspondent than I have been heretofore. But I do not know that I shall be able to reform my bad habits. I will try.

March 24.

I know not in what littlenesses the days speed by; but mostly in attending to everybody's business but my own, and in doing everything but what I most want to do. It frets my life out.

"Be it known to each one," says Dante in his *Convito*, i. 7, "that nothing harmonized by a musical bond can be transferred from its native language into another without breaking all its sweetness and harmony." Of the same opinion was Cervantes, when he makes the Curate say of the Spanish translator of Ariosto: "He took from him much of his natural value; and all will do the like who endeavor to translate books of verse into another language: for however great the care taken and the ability displayed, they will never reach the point they have in their first birth." — *Don Quixote*, i. 6.

March 23.

March 24.

March 25.

A most lovely, lovely day! Spring begins again. The air is soft, the sunshine warm and bright, the turf under foot like a saturated sponge. A happy, happy day! for I was at home and in good spirits, and could work easily and cheerfully, without straining a muscle. It is delicious to get one's window open again, and breathe freely as in summer. But I think spring a most restless season. I cannot possibly sit still. Change of place seems almost indispensable; yet, being chained, I can only move in thought.

March 26.

Fortunately, Heidelberg is a very beautiful place. The town stands between steep and high mountains on the Neckar, just where the valley, before so narrow that you can almost throw a stone across, spreads out trumpet-mouthed into the broad plain of the Rhine. The change in the face of the landscape is sudden and beautiful, — no gradual transition, with broken and irregular hills, but the mountains go down with one grand sweep into the plain. Overlooking the town stand the ruins of a magnificent old castle.

March 25.

March 26.

March 27.

Sometimes a single felicitous expression or line in a poem saves it from oblivion. There are other poems in which no individual lines or passages predominate. Like Wagner's music, they are equally sustained throughout, and depend for their effect upon their impression as a whole, and not on particular parts. Which of these kinds is the better is a question that should neither be asked nor answered. Each is good in its way. We should be thankful for both.

March 28.

I fear that I cannot establish by any historic proof the identity of the old building you speak of in your kind letter with that in which Evangeline found Gabriel. A great many years ago, strolling through the streets of Philadelphia, I passed an old almshouse within high brick walls, and with trees growing in its enclosure. The quiet and seclusion of the place — "the reserve," as your poor woman so happily said — impressed me deeply. This was long before the poem was written and before I had heard the tradition on which it was founded. But remembering the place, I chose it for the final scene. . . . The cottage I do not remember; only an enclosure, with tall trees and brick walls, — just enough for the imagination to work upon.

March 27.

March 28.

March 29.

As oaks shoot up where pine-woods have been burned, so great resolves spring up when youthful passions have burned out, or where the ceasing of overshadowing cares lets in the sunshine upon the buried seed.

How sudden and sweet are the visitations of our happiest thoughts; what delightful surprises! In the midst of life's most trivial occupations, — as we are reading a newspaper, or lighting our bed-candle, or waiting for our horses to drive round, — the lovely face appears; and thoughts more precious than gold are whispered in our ear.

March 30.

Heidelberg. The short winter was over, and March came bringing the early spring. Windows were opened, and through them came the warm air and the smell of the fresh-turned earth as the gardeners began their work. Boys offered flowers for sale in the streets, — "pinks such as I used to take to church when a boy." The almond-trees blossomed. Long walks began to be taken. By the end of April the nightingales had begun their song in the castle-grounds. At night the whole air full of fragrance from the fresh cherry-blossoms shining overhead and whitening the plain below "like a silver mist."

March 29.

March 30.

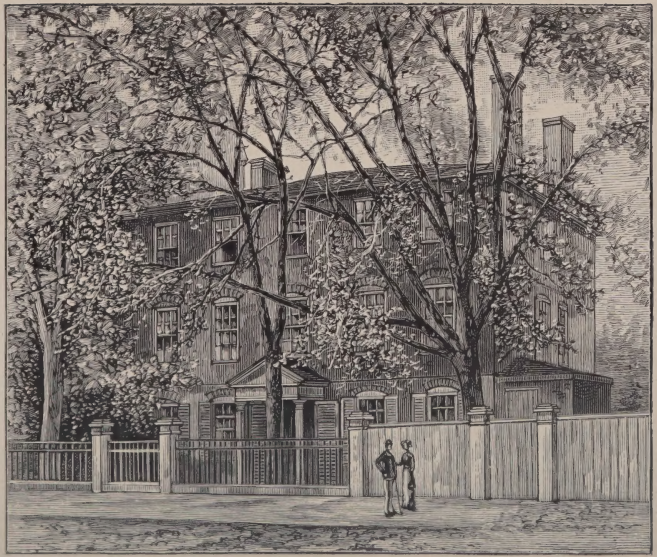
March 31.

Winter has come back in great force, — a whirling snow-storm to end the month.

Signs of old age are, — a tendency to cross your hands on the top of a cane ; a tendency to pick up pins from the carpet; a tendency in your hat to come down on the back of your head ; a disposition to sit still. When a young man sees a mountain he says: "Let us climb it." The old man says: "Let us stay down here."

A disposition to wear old clothes is one of the signs of old age.

March 31.



THE LONGFELLOW HOUSE, PORTLAND.

April

April 1.

April-Fool's day, and the children alert with fun; the little girls trying to make papa one, and getting caught in the process.

A violent storm; the marshes a lake; the causeway under water; wind howling, and rain pouring. I never saw the tides so high.

A great rain; the whole village under water.

April 2.

This is Fast Day. A bright, lovely morning, — the eaves dripping with a ceaseless sound, sun bright, and birds singing. Oh! such a day makes me long for wings! I cannot read, I cannot write. I would be away! But it is too wet to walk, and I cannot ride; so here I sit and dream.

April 1.

April 2.

April 3.

A wedding in St. John's Church, close by us. An April day of cloud and sunshine; but in the prayer, as the clergyman said, "Send down thy blessing upon them," the sun burst from the clouds and poured through the high windows of the choir a flood of golden light upon the bride and bridegroom.

April 4.

Caught cold last night at the opera, from an open door. Some demon always holds a door open at such places.

Pierced through and through with these cold steel arrows of the west wind. It seemed as if Nature were punishing her children with the *knout*.

April 3.

April 4.

April 5.

I chanced to cast my eyes this morning upon a map of Italy, where my old route was marked in red, — the red vein of my young life-blood. Instantly I went mad for travel. It is spring, and the sun shines bright; and it seems a waste of life to stay here.

I often dream of walking on the Pincian to see a Claude sunset, or listen to the melodious fountains of the Villa Borghese between those heaven-propping pines. But it is dangerous to dwell too long on such unattainable visions, while shivering, as now, before a coal fire, with snowdrops looking askance at snow-banks outside, and the poor spring birds singing dolefully through the descending flakes.

April 6.

The idea, the meaning of America is very grand. She is working out one of the highest problems in the "celestial mechanics" of man. We must not be too impatient nor chide too harshly if in doing this she sometimes assumes an ungainly attitude; nor have our teeth set on edge because the slate-pencil scratches a little.

April 5.

April 6.

April 7.

I have never seen such a beautiful friendship between men of such distinct personalities,[1] though closely linked together by mutual tastes and affections. They criticise and praise each other's performances with a frankness not to be surpassed, and seem to have attained that happy height of faith where no misunderstanding, no jealousy, no reserve, exists.

1 The Five of Clubs.

April 8.

Striving, but alas, how vainly! to work. One interruption after another, till I long to fly to the desert for a season.

Letters, letters, letters! How they come, and how they consume one's time! Not those from friends, — I do not mean that, for it is always a pleasure to hear from them, — but the "perfect stranger," as he is fond of calling himself, who always wants you to turn his grindstone. A charming essay might be written on the Perfect Stranger.

April 7.

April 8.

April 9.

Went to see the Aquaria; a whole room-full of tanks. Particularly amused by the movements of a red, irascible stickleback, who was building a nest or something of the kind, and kept his half-dozen ghostly wives at a distance at the top of the tank, where they fanned themselves complacently, as if they were looking down the cellar stairs, while he, like a butler, was storing away his old port. Every now and then he would dart up the stairs and give one of them a bite.

April 10.

My days are worn away by unprofitable trifles done for other people, who ought to be more considerate than to impose such things upon me.

It seems like folly to record the college days, — the working in the crypts of life, the underground labor. Pardon me, O ye souls who, seeing education only from afar, speak of it in such glowing words! You see only the great pictures hanging in the light; not the grinding of the paint and oil, nor the pulling of hair from the camel's back for the brushes.

April 9.

April 10.

April 11.

Walk out to Cambridge alone, in the pleasant, warm evening, with the stars and the lamps reflected in the water. The bridge is always beautiful at night.

April 12.

We go into town to dine with Mrs. S. A. What a charming household is hers! The gentle, glowing, benignant, happy old man, in his crimson velvet dressing-gown, like a sun setting in crimson clouds, shining over all with cheerful, genial light; slowly, slowly rolling down into the great sea; yet making us feel that all this worth cannot grow old, all this benevolence cannot die, and that every setting sun is somewhere a rising sun. Then she herself, so young and fresh in her enjoyment of life; with all her French taste and love of the beautiful, — the old French blood showing itself in her Madame de Sévigné love of details and of social life; and M., who is eyes to the blind and feet to the lame, and whose whole life is absorbed into the life of this family, — the whole presents a very peculiar and charming tableau; and as I looked at it by the fitful firelight this evening, it drew me into many dreams and reveries.

April 11.

April 12.

April 13.

You are hard at work; and God bless you in it. In every country the "dangerous classes" are those who do no work; for instance, the nobility in Europe and the slave-holders here. It is evident that the world needs a new nobility, — not of the gold medal and *sangre azul* order; not of the blood that is blue because it stagnates; but of the red arterial blood, that circulates, and has heart in it, and life, and labor.

April 14.

To my great surprise, I find the making of Notes to Dante very pleasant work. I wish somebody would pour a barrel of something into the grave of the commentators, as the bridegroom in the old Icelandic tale did into the grave of his friend the toper, to moisten the dry bones. I shall not be able to do that; but something like it, perhaps. I have begun already to light up these footlights of the great Comedy, and am not wholly dissatisfied with the effect. Will the oil hold out? I hope so.

April 13.

April 14.

April 15.

Every reader has his first book ; I mean to say, one book among all others which in early youth first fascinates his imagination, and at once excites and satisfies the desires of his mind. To me, this first book was the Sketch-Book of Washington Irving. I was a school-boy when it was published, and read each succeeding number with ever increasing wonder and delight, spell-bound by its pleasant humor, its melancholy tenderness, its atmosphere of revery, — nay, even by its gray-brown covers, the shaded letters of its titles, and the fair clear type, which seemed an outward symbol of its style. — How many delightful books the same author has given us. . . . Yet still the charm of the Sketch-Book remains unbroken ; the old fascination remains about it ; and whenever I open its pages, I open also that mysterious door which leads back into the haunted chambers of youth.

April 16.

I feel better these college work-days, when I can let my electricity off among my pupils, and, like Eugene Aram, with a great sorrow at my heart, "sit among the urchins in the school." Activity, — constant, ceaseless activity, — this is what I need.

April 15.

April 16.

April 17.

I seem to be quite banished from all literary work save that of my professorship. The day is so full of business, and people of all kinds coming and going. When shall I have quiet? And will the old poetic mood come back?

This is the most unproductive year of my life. I hope I shall be roused up again one of these days. But who knows? This may be the end of it. I should think so, had I not often before found an unexpected passage through the adamantine wall.

April 18.

A tremendous northeast storm, like that of a year ago, which carried away the Minot's Ledge lighthouse.

The storm continues. I rather like the shadowed light, the glare shut out, the seclusion, that comes with a storm.

A furious, driving snow-storm, and so near the end of April! Where is the "oldest inhabitant"?

April 17.

April 18.

April 19.

It is raining, raining with a soft and pleasant sound. I cannot read, I cannot write, — but dream only. The visits of many pleasant thoughts, the coming and going of strange and foreign fantasies, have left my mind ajar, and it swings to and fro in the wind of various opinions. I have been looking at the old Northern Sagas, and thinking of a series of ballads or a romantic poem on the deeds of the first bold viking who crossed to this western world, with storm-spirits and devil-machinery under water. New England ballads I have long thought of. This seems to be an introduction. I will dream more of this.

April 20.

The highest exercise of imagination is not to devise what has no existence, but rather to perceive what really exists, though unseen by the outward eye, — not creation, but insight.

When an author is entering the dreary confines of old age, and the critics begin to cry, "Go up, bald head!" it is not strange that he should want to let the bears loose upon them.

April 19.

April 20.

April 21.

Nothing can well surpass the beauty of Cambridge at this season. Every tree is heavy with blossoms, and the whole air laden with perfume. My residence here in the old Craigie House is a paradise.

Make all haste you can conveniently to come on. The weather is fine, the walking good. But I begin to find that it takes two to take a walk; yes, and a *dog*.

April 22.

To-day I have been reading Sumner's letters from Italy. They are full of enthusiasm, and exhibit the softer and more poetical side of his character, — a side so little known or dreamed of by most people. He speaks of you often, and never without a caress.

What a devourer of books he was! It amazes me to see the extent of his reading in four summer months. He brought away from Italy a vast amount of knowledge; while I brought away little more than memories and impressions, — a kind of golden atmosphere, which has always illuminated my life. Perhaps we were both wiser than we knew. Each assimilated to himself what best served his purpose afterward.

April 21.

April 22.

April 23.

We live in nests, and not in houses. The penny-a-liner, the *Diable Boiteux* of the Press, has unroofed all our habitations. Shall Fechter dine with Longfellow on Tuesday, and shall it be a secret in Chicago on Wednesday? No! let it be proclaimed by telegraph, —

> "And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
> The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
> The cannons to the heavens, the heavens to earth,
> 'Now the King drinks to *Hamlet*.'"

These newspaper correspondents have become the greatest nuisance. Every nook and corner is infested with them, — destroying all privacy.

April 24.

It is always disagreeable when the glow of composition is over to criticise what one has been in love with. We think it is Rachel, but wake to find it Leah.

The spring came suddenly, bursting upon the world as a child bursts into a room, with a laugh and a shout and hands full of flowers.

April 23.

April 24.

April 25.

Read to my boys after chapel. Passed most of the afternoon under the pines in the garden, pacing to and fro, and pondering many things.

April 26.

To Charles Sumner.

New York, April 26, 1842.

Your letter reached me this afternoon, and made my heart swell into my throat. But I have determined to put away all the gloomy forebodings which are wont to haunt the imaginations of the outward-bound. I send you back, then, none of the darkness which, as you can easily imagine — you who know so well how truly I love my friends — at times usurps the empire of my thoughts, but a parting gleam of sunshine, as a farewell and a benediction. Meanwhile I treasure up your kind parting words in my inmost soul, and will read your letter over again far out at sea, and hear in it friendly voices from the shore.

But one of my candles is sinking in its socket. It is nearly one o'clock, and I am the only person up in the house. You see I devote my last moments and last thoughts to you. Think of me often and long. Once more, *Benedicite!* When this reaches you I shall be rocking on the broad sea, thinking of you all through many long hours.

April 25.

April 26.

April 27.

Decidedly, the calm, dull husbanding of one's nervous energies, though less conducive to swift intellectual effort, is more so to happiness. Let us be calm and happy, rather than excitable and *nervous-minded.*

April 28.

In the afternoon I went to a concert, and had the inevitable cold draught let in upon me before it was over, spoiling the effect of the beautiful Allegro of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. And, finally, to-day I am paying the penalty of my dissipation, having taken a heavy cold from the ladies' fans behind me, and the invariable theatrical custom of flooding a heated audience with cold air from open doors and windows. I might have foreseen it, and did foresee it; and get no consolation from Molière's "Tu l'as voulu, George Dandin," or his "Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère?"

April 27.

April 28.

April 29.

R. comes to dinner, and gives us an account of a German wedding, — a romantic and poetic wedding in Cambridgeport, — and of the "*Polterabend*," or evening before the wedding, when the bridal gifts are presented. The Germans have so much poetry in their natures, and in their lives! This was the marriage of a musician and a gardener's daughter; and the guests came in various costumes, — housekeeper with keys, ballad-singers with songs, girls with flowers, etc., each presenting a gift and reciting an appropriate verse.

April 30.

The last day of April; and such an April, and such a last day! Cold as Greenland, with an east wind that ploughs and harrows one through and through, and sows coughs and catarrhs and rheumatisms among much-suffering mortals.

Walking the other day along the accustomed townward walk, made pleasanter by remembrances of you, I met the East Wind, blowing, blowing; and I said, "This will never do!" And the day after, in the same place, I met the West Wind, and said, "O Mudjekeewis, you are worse than your brother Wabun!" But I hope next week this will all be over, and spring begin as if it were giving some attention to its business, and not going into hopeless bankruptcy.

April 29.

April 30.

THE VASSALL–CRAIGIE–LONGFELLOW HOUSE, CAMBRIDGE.

May

May 1.

How pleasant it is to write this date, — to say May, and think of flowers! It is a glorious spring morning.

A bright, warm May-day. The children have a May-pole in the garden, and a feast in the summer-house; half-a-dozen little girls, with wreaths on their heads, enjoying themselves demurely. After all, holidays are hard things to manage in New England. People cry for more of them; but when they get them, they don't know what to do with them. It is not in their hearts to be merry.

May 2.

EPITAPH

On a Maid-of-all-Work.

Hic jacet ancilla
Quae omnia egit,
Et nihil tetigit
Quod non fregit.[1]

[1] For those who have "forgotten their Latin," this version must suffice: —

Here a maid-of-all-work
Her rest doth take;
When alive, she touched nothing
She did not break.

May 1.

May 2.

May 3.

Another lovely day; the lilacs all in bloom and tossing in the wind.

Walk in the garden, hearing the birds, and the trilling of the frogs like the chorus in the Greek tragedy, or a huge Æolian harp vibrating in the distance.

May 4.

A perfectly delicious day, the warm sunshine delicately iced by an east wind. I cannot remember what I did in the morning; but I believe it was nothing at all, — or as near that as our imperfect nature will admit.

Sunday is like a stile between the fields of toil, where we can kneel and pray, or sit and meditate.

The days die and make no sign. The Castalian fount is still. It has become a pool which no descending angel troubles.

May 3.

May 4.

May 5.

A furious northeast storm. It is as good as a sentinel at the door.

A stormy night; great gusts of wind, and a deluge of rain. I thought of the youths on guard, at arsenals and forts.

To ——.

We have to-day a furious northeaster, reminding one of Dante's tempest in the *Inferno*, —

> della piova
> Eterna, maledetta, fredda e greve
> Grandine grossa, ed acqua tinta e neve,

premonitory of the rain of *acqua tinta*, or ink, which I am preparing to shower upon you.

May 6.

A wild south wind blowing. Cherry-trees in full bloom, and dandelions in the grass.

How the days whirl away. Each a white milestone; and we rush by with such speed that they look like grave-stones.

Yesterday was a lovely day between two dull ones; like a fair white sheet between two blotters. To-day it is cold again.

May 5.

May 6.

May 7.

After the holidays the old mill begins to grind again; and I, one of the millers, my hair white with meal, pour in the grist and open and shut the gate, and try to sing amid the din and clatter.

Met young ———. He seems to be always in the opposition; good-naturedly enough, but very foolishly. How often this is the case with young Americans educated in Europe. No matter what is said, they instantly assume the attitude of defiance.

May 8.

Saw the first blossoms of the cherry-trees on the sunny side of the street.

The hot weather! There is something magical in this sudden vegetation. Yesterday the boughs all bare, to-day all covered with leaves, and the horse-chestnuts open all at once, "like green umbrellas."

Last night I dreamed of Emerson. He said: "The spring will come again; but shall we see it, or only the eternal spring up there?" lifting both his hands on high.

May 7.

May 8.

May 9.

I am very fond of photographs. Did you ever examine what the photographers call the *negative*, in which all that is to be light is dark, and the reverse? If so, you will feel how beautiful was the remark made by a brother-in-law of mine that "this world is only the *negative* of the world to come, and what is dark here will be light hereafter."

Life grows too intricate, with its thousandfold petty cares and vexations. Over the stocks and stones the stream frets and chafes and murmurs. Patience!

May 10.

A delicious morning like that of 1843. Fifteen years ago! The air laden with the perfume of cherry blossoms, and full of sunshine and songs of birds, as it ought to be.

Beautiful, after a week of rain. A day full of sunshine, blossoms, and song of birds; and of tender memories!

A lovely day, full of sunshine, blossoms, and sweet, sad memories.

May 9.

May 10.

May 11.

I shall never forget the delightful feelings awakened within me on approaching Venice, and entering its principal canal. It was a bright moonlight night, and a thousand lamps glimmered in the distance along the water's edge. Above rose the palaces, and domes, and spires of the city, emerging from the sea. Occasionally a gondola, with its little lamp, darted, like a shooting star, along the water, and disappeared in some dark alley. The only sound that reached me was the distant chime, measuring the march of night, the dashing of an oar, or the voice of a gondolier. There was something so like enchantment in the scene that I almost expected to see it sink into the sea, and disappear like an optical delusion or some magic city in the clouds. Indeed, all is so visionary and fairy-like here that one is almost afraid of setting foot upon the ground, lest he should sink the city.

May 12.

What a beautiful world this child's world is! So instinct with life, so illuminated with imagination! I take infinite delight in seeing it go on around me, and feel all the tenderness of the words that fell from the blessed lips, — "Suffer the little children to come unto me." After that benediction how can any one dare to deal harshly with a child!

May 11.

May 12.

May 13.

Venice is the most wonderful city I ever beheld. You will be delighted with it. The Italian language in the mouth of a Venetian woman is perfect music. You cannot conceive how soft it is. Indeed, I have not yet heard a harsh sound, even among the common people.

The object that has most interested me is the old Palace of the Doges. . . . The old dungeons are shown you. Most of them are entirely dark; into others a feeble ray of daylight struggles. From the walls of one of them I copied the following inscription, traced in rude characters by some hard instrument: "Confide in no one; think and be silent, if thou wishest to escape the snare and treachery of spies. Sorrow and repentance avail not here."

May 14.

As I was passing down the village street yesterday, I saw at a shop window, directly opposite Felton's study, a beautiful orange-tree, having upon it six oranges and a hundred buds and blossoms. I could not resist the temptation of buying it; and it is now flourishing in my own window and filling the room with fragrance. . . . It stands under the shelter of a lemon-tree ten feet high, which for the last ten years has kept up a make-believe summer all winter long in my study.

May 13.

May 14.

May 15.

How beautiful Venice is, and how indescribable. You can show a model of a gondola, and we all know what a canal is, and an old marble palace touched by Time is not difficult to see in the mind's eye ; but to combine them all, to vault them with such a sky, — this is not easy. One great delight of Venice is that all the sting is taken away from sight-seeing. It ceases to be a task. Venice itself is the greatest of sights. And Florence, too; the same indescribable charm; the same blending of present beauty and traditional interest hangs over it. But then Florence is still alive, and not enslaved.

May 16.

Like delicious perfume, like far-off music, like remembered pictures, came floating before me amid college classes, as through parting clouds, bright glimpses and visions of Tyrolean lakes.

A charming day and a dull sermon. It was quite impossible to keep my wandering thoughts within the four chapel walls ; and away they flew over hill and dale, like birds uncaged. We sat long in the apple-tree, both before and after dinner.

May 15.

May 16.

May 17.

Suddenly, with a gush of song and sunshine, after long days of rain and dreary weather, spring and summer come together, bride and bridegroom, — blush of youth, and heat of passion.

A delicious spring day. How I long to break from my moorings and be away! The weight and work of the college is crushing me. It is not the labor, but the being bound hand and foot, the going round and round in the tread-mill, that oppresses me. Air, air, more air! more freedom!

May 18.

Raining, and the birds shrieking! The storm will thresh all the blossoms from the trees. Where do the birds hide themselves in such storms? At what firesides do they dry their feathery cloaks? At the fireside of the great sun, to-morrow, — not before; they must sit in wet clothes till then.

A cold rain. Snug by the fireside, meditating the Tragedy. It is delightful to revolve in one's mind a new conception. It is only the writing down which fatigues.

May 17.

May 18.

May 19.

A lovely spring day. A mist and shadow of tender leaves over all the landscape.

The lovely weather continues, and makes me as lazy as Maxentius, who could not, or would not, walk even in the shade of his own portico.

A delicious morning. Veils of mist hanging like pendants from cathedral roofs over the emerald floor of the meadows. The silver Charles pursuing its way as of old, with a white-sailed schooner coming down with wind and tide.

May 20.

First grand display of buttercups in the grass. How beautiful they are! The purple buds of the lilacs tip the hedges; and the flowery tide of spring sweeps on. Everywhere in the air the warlike rumor of drums mingles discordantly with the song of birds.

The lilacs are in blossom, and the apple-trees. The whole country is a flower-garden; and all the birds singing, singing, singing!

May 19.

May 20.

May 21.

Walked before breakfast to inhale the air from cherry blossoms, and drink the first foam of the spring.

Clear, warm, and sunny among the cherry and peach blossoms in the garden.

How glorious these spring mornings are! I sit by an open window and inhale the pure morning air and feel how delightful it is to live! Peach, pear, and cherry trees are all in blossom together in the garden.

May 22.

At a social gathering a poem recently published was picked to pieces amid shouts of laughter, in which it was observed Longfellow did not join. A few minutes later, taking up the despised poem and selecting here and there a good line or phrase, like one looking for flowers rather than nettles, he said, "After all, young gentlemen, the man who has thought these beautiful things cannot be wholly ridiculous!"

More and more do I feel, as I advance in life, how little we really know of each other. Friendship seems to me like the touch of musical-glasses, — it is only contact; but the glasses themselves, and their contents, remain quite distinct and unmingled.

May 21.

May 22.

May 23.

I fear I am a restless and uncomfortable kind of traveller. I no sooner reach a place than, like the character in the Vicar of Wakefield, who was collecting materials for the Life of the celebrated Mr. Trip, I "exhibit a great desire to be gone again." The truth is, I believe in rapid travelling, with one's eyes open; and I observe that people who stay long in places always waste their time in lounging about the hotels.

May 24.

In the evening took the railway from Ghent to Bruges. Stopped at *La Fleur de Blé*, attracted by the name, and found it a good hotel. It was not yet night; and I strolled through the fine old streets and felt myself a hundred years old. The chimes seemed to be ringing incessantly; and the air of repose and antiquity was delightful. . . . O those chimes, those chimes! how deliciously they lull one to sleep! The little bells, with their clear liquid notes, like the voices of boys in a choir, and the solemn bass of the great bell tolling in, like the voice of a friar!

May 23.

May 24.

May 25.

Rose before five and climbed the high belfry which was once crowned by the gilded copper dragon now at Ghent. The carillon of forty-eight bells; the little chamber in the tower; the machinery, like a huge barrel-organ, with keys like a musical instrument for the *carilloneur;* the view from the tower, the singing of swallows with the chimes; the fresh morning air; the mist in the horizon; the red roofs far below; the canal, like a silver clasp, linking the city with the sea, — how much to remember!

May 26.

The day at Antwerp was, beyond comparison, the happiest I have passed since I left you. It was filled with exciting thoughts. The glorious spire of the cathedral, the well of Quintin Matsys, his paintings in the gallery, his grave at the church door, with the remembrance of his struggles and his *success;* the noble paintings of Rubens, the antique streets, the chiming bells, all touched me deeply. Had you passed the Sunday there you would have wept with emotion many times. I confess to having my eyes often filled. It was a day to be remembered.

May 25.

May 26.

May 27.

As I was standing at my front door this morning, a lady in black came up and asked: "Is this the house where Longfellow was born?"

"No, he was not born here."

"Did he die here?"

"Not yet."

"Are you Longfellow?"

"I am."

"I thought you died two years ago."

It is a great mystery to many people that an author should reveal to the public, secrets that he shrinks from telling to his most intimate friends.

May 28.

What a dripping month of May we have had! But to-day the Spring comes out with all her lilacs in bloom, and all her horse-chestnut tapers lighted.

Bright and cool. At midnight a lovely aurora borealis, a Bridge of Bifrost, shaking under the tread of the giants.

People who have known me as a boy have a strange way of saying, "It seems to me you are growing stout;" or, "You are getting a few gray hairs."

May 27.

May 28.

May 29.

Sunny and bright. The chapel in the afternoon so hot that it was a martyrdom. As I leaned against the bars in Felton's pew, and felt the hot air coming up from below, as if from live coals, I could think of nought but Saint Lawrence and his gridiron.

I am tired, not of work, but of the sameness of work.

Spring brings the *wandertrieb*, — the longing to be on the wing.

May 30.

Of late my heart has quite turned my head out of doors.

No journalizing of late. I have been flitting to and fro; and tarrying for a while at Nahant, beside the sublime sea. I sit at an open window this bright morning, and am happy, though alone.

May 29.

May 30.

May 31.

What a cold May we have had! However, the foliage is heavy and green as in England, and the lilacs are in bloom, and the buttercups scattered about in prodigal waste, — "the golden largess of Nature," as F. said four years ago, when we drove together down the green lanes of Watertown.

The last day of May has come, presenting the heavens like a crystal goblet, full of sunshine iced with an east wind.

We have not yet decided where to go for the summer. You are for Switzerland, it seems. We will think of you, eating cherries in the lovely valley of Interlaken. But I think you will cross into Italy. Or will England, like a great magnet, draw you back? For my part, I think I should rush to meet the spring on the southern slope of the Alps; and cross and recross the mountain passes, and swallow as much mountain air as possible.

May 31.

Craigie House, from the West.

June

June 1.

Reached home at noon on one of the loveliest days of the year. We have seen nothing more verdant and blooming than Cambridge. The old house looks delightfully, — the green grass waving in the wind, and a whole California of buttercups, like scales of gold in the rolling waves of the Sacramento.

Cold as October. Fires blazing. Haymaking seems a joke. Yet it must be made, that we may have haycocks for the birthday.

A warm morning; *frappé* at noon with an east wind.

June 2.

Raining again. We went through the domestic offering of burning out the chimneys, a rather wild and sublime spectacle out of doors; and a roaring within, like pent-up bulls and lions.

A great wind to-day. Sat on the back piazza and heard it rave and roar. The trees seemed to turn their backs upon it and try to run; but their roots were fast planted in the ground, and they struggled as in a kind of nightmare.

June 1.

June 2.

June 3.

Sat under the trees and read Goethe's *Italiänische Reise*, part second, — from Brenner to Verona. The traveller's heart dilates as he journeys south into the sunshine. He is curious to see "whether the wrinkles that have formed and pressed themselves in his mind will come out again;" he rejoices as if he had been born and bred in Italy, "and was returning from a journey to Greenland;" he is glad that "the beloved language is living, and the language of daily use."

June 4.

June is *our* month. Oh, perfect days, after the dreary, restless rain! The lilacs perfume the air. The horse-chestnuts light the landscape with their great taper-like blossoms.

June is now in its full freshness and pomp; the hot day, the cool breezy night, with the double darkness of heavy foliage, and the odor of the lilac hedges.

June 3.

June 4.

June 5.

There is a great difference between sculpture and painting on the one hand, and poetry on the other; namely, in the manipulation, — the delightful sensation of the busy fingers, the electric pleasure of the touch; in the creative power of the hand following the creative power of the mind. This poetry has not; the conception is all in all; the record has more pain than pleasure in it; the pen does not give form and color, as the chisel and the brush.

June 6.

A superb *fête champêtre.* The evening, the blue lake, the boat with its white sail; the music, the dance on the greensward; the broad-spreading tent, "like a morning-glory inverted;" the crowd, well-dressed and fair to see; the gleam of lamps through the gathering twilight; the procession to supper, — the young bride led on by the white-haired Mr. Otis, — all make a picture in my mind of great beauty. Then followed fireworks; and as we drove away, the broad moon rose over the trees.

June 5.

June 6.

June 7.

Another lovely summer morning, with merry, loud carol of birds, and the odor of mock orange streaming in at the windows. Ah, how such mornings affect me! Switzerland, the Tyrol, the north of Italy, — all rise before me, and seem to draw me away, away, bodily, as if in some dream, where all things are possible.

June 8.

I slaked my thirst for foreign travel by driving to town in the omnibus, and walking twice through the market, where the mingled and delicious odors of the vegetables, and the sight thereof, transported me straightway to France. There is no more powerful medium of association than odors. On my way out, I stood awhile on the bridge, looking at the water and saying to myself that this was a portion of the same sea that washes the shores of England and of Italy. I then got into the omnibus, and found there some Spanish people, — men and girls; and heard that sweet tongue again, and saw the well-known Spanish beauty of face and form, and imagined myself in Andalusia.

June 7.

June 8.

June 9.

C.'s birthday. He is eight years old, and had a charming party of children, wild with play among the haycocks; the seat in the old apple-tree turned into a fort; great scrambling for sugar-plums, and the like. All ending with supper and a dance in the drawing-room.

I hear the cawing of the multitudinous crows from the mountain. Rob, the farmer's boy, says they are fighting with the hawks, who eat their eggs. Yesterday's text comes often to my mind. I shall always think of it when I see the yellow patch of grain upon the mountain: "There shall be a handful of grain on the top of the mountain, whose fruit shall wave like Lebanon," — from the seventy-third Psalm.

June 10.

A delightful evening. We read the *Campaner-Thal* of Jean Paul, and saw the moon rise through the hay-scented air. How few evenings there are that are not too damp to be enjoyed out of doors! . . . Out of doors a lovely June night with a bright moon; and the odor of the new-mown hay crowned the whole.

June 9.

June 10.

June 11.

Drove down to Nahant, and took up our [summer] quarters in the old place. In the afternoon, a rain pouring, thundering and lightning. After which, a rainbow, and a brilliant barred sky in the west, of green and gold.

Walked with the children to Eliot's beach, and looked down on the ghost-haunted rocks, and thought of those who were here last year and are now dead.

June 12.

Cadiz. I have a pleasant chamber looking out upon the principal square of the city. At morning the sun awakes me, and at evening the fresh sea breeze comes in at my window. At night the square is crowded with the beauty and fashion of the city. The trees that surround it have lamps hung in their branches, and a stone balustrade, with benches, runs completely round the area.

. . . Indeed, it is like going back two centuries in this old world, this visit to Spain. There is so little change in the Spanish character, that you find everything as it is said to have been two hundred years ago. You see the same dresses and the same equipages that are represented in the old plates of Gil Blas and Don Quixote; the same leather doublets, trunk hose, and odd-looking little carriages.

June 11.

June 12.

June 13.

This is summer, at last. And very charming it is to sit out of doors and feel warm in the open air, and look at the white clouds, and be as happy as Isaac Walton, without the barbarity of his hooks.

The scent of the wild roses that surround the cottage mingles pleasantly with the odor of the sea.

Nahant. At our old quarters in the village. Last summer's life resumed, as if after a sleep. Carriages drive by, cocks crow, hens cackle, the dust flies, the sea gleams in the distance.

June 14.

Two weeks of our Nahant life gone. The old mower swings his scythe, and the golden summer days fall. . . . Life may make up in latitude what it wants in longitude. A great many new impressions suggest a long lapse of time

June 13.

June 14.

June 15.

The Alhambra. It was the view from the windows which most enchanted me. The romantic valley of the Darro directly beneath me, the river stealing along its sandy bed, the gardens overhanging it; the yellow foliage of the autumn; the merriment of a troop of children, the sound of whose voices just reached my ear; the cluster of gypsy huts excavated in the hillside opposite; and over all, the soft vapory sky, — composed a scene which I cannot well describe. There are moments in our lives to which we feel that romance could add nothing, and which poetry itself could not beautify. Such were those I passed in lingering about the Alhambra and dreaming over the warlike deeds of other days.

June 16.

I must be satisfied with looking at the blue hills from my window, instead of the White Mountains from yours. Yet what would I not give for the sight of a brook brawling through a wood, and the sound thereof.

The moon is still shining. I looked out of the window just now, and there it was, making my neighbor's house beautiful, — which is more than the architect did. I begin to think that the moon never sets in Cambridge.

June 15.

June 16.

June 17.

A drive and a bath on the beach. How beautifully the soft sea spreads its broad-feathered fans upon the shore. In the afternoon we went and sat by the sea under the cliff, and watched the breakers and the sails, and thought the rocks looked like the Mediterranean shore, and that the Italian language would sound well here.

The presidential dough is beginning to bubble and rise, eager to be transubstantiated into a real president.

June 18.

How lovely the view of the harbor, the pearly sea with its almost irresistible attraction drawing me into it. A whole fleet of vessels in the horizon, looking in the vapory distance like the spires and towers of a great city. Bathed before breakfast in the sea.

The rain is over, the tide is rising. One by one the banks of sea-shells and the brown weed-covered rocks have disappeared, and the ships have sailed away from the mouth of the harbor, and the city by the sea has sunk into its depths.

June 17.

June 18.

June 19.

We drove to the "Verandah," or Oak Grove in Westbrook, where we propose to inhale the sea for six weeks. A delicious place; a promontory fronting the entrance of the harbor, crowned with a grove of oaks.

Passed the morning in the grove, but could read only a page or two. The sea-side drowsiness and dreaminess stole over me; and I sat gazing at the silvery sea and the crowd of sails making seaward or landward in the offing, between the mainland and the islands. Birds were singing all about, strange sound by the sea.

June 20.

"It is not enough to be a great man," says the French proverb, "but you must come at the right time." This is particularly true of authors.

Unmarried men are not columns, only pilasters, or half-columns.

How often it happens that after we know a man personally, we cease to read his writings. Is it that we exhaust him by a look? Is it that his personality gives us all of him that we desire?

June 19.

June 20.

June 21.

Authors and artists of every kind have one element of unhappiness in their lot, namely, the disproportion between their designs and their deeds. Even the greatest cannot execute one tenth part of what they conceive.

Every author has the whole past to contend with; all the centuries are upon him. He is compared with Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton.

June 22.

A continued series of interruptions, from breakfast till dinner. I could not get half an hour to myself all day long. Oh, for a good snow-storm to block the door!

At sixty we must work more slowly and more calmly; old age is better than youth for system and supervision, though not for swift execution of details.

June 21.

June 22.

June 23.

I can almost fancy myself in Spain, the morning is so soft and beautiful. The tessellated shadow of the honeysuckle lies motionless upon my study floor, as if it were a figure in the carpet; and through the open window comes the fragrance of the wild brier and the mock orange. The birds are carolling in the trees, and their shadows flit across the window as they dart to and fro in the sunshine; while the murmur of the bee, the cooing of doves from the eaves, and the whirring of a little humming-bird that has its nest in the honeysuckle, send up a sound of joy to meet the rising sun.

June 24.

It is of great importance for a man to know how he stands with his friends; at least, I think so. Through good report and through evil report, the voice of a friend has a wonder-working power; and from the very hour we hear it, "the fever leaves us."

Took the children to the Swallows' Cave after breakfast. A delightful stroll on the cliff, watching the sails in sunshine and in shadow, and our own shadows on far-off brown rocks. This is our last evening walk at Nahant, and it is gone like the sails and the shadows. To-morrow the term begins.

June 23.

June 24.

June 25.

Two nights ago, as I returned from an evening visit, your letter looked down upon me from the mantel-piece with a most friendly, albeit outlandish, aspect, — its face being tattooed with postmarks black and red. I sat down and read it through, solemn and glad by turns, as the string was touched. It seemed to me like a voice of Eld, — like the voice of the northern god Mimer, who sits by the wave of the Destiny of the Past, and utters traditions. But of the past enough. Let me tell you of the present.

June 26.

Once more in delightful Cambridge, with blossoms, sunshine, and singing-birds all around. And now to work again, if possible, in earnest; though Heaven knows I have little desire for work. A cool, delicious night. The air embalmed with blossoms. The moon blazing red among the clouds, like a bale-fire on the summit of a dark hill. Sat by the open window till midnight, weaving fond, foolish dreams.

June 25.

June 26.

June 27.

I labor and work right on with what heart and courage I may. I do a great deal in college, and devote my hours to literature, and "by the vision splendid am on my way attended." As soon as I can bring my mind to bear upon a single point with any effect, I mean to write something that you shall hear of in distant Italy, — if in no other way, by a letter from me!

Are you thin-skinned? I trust not. I have one excellent remedy on all such occasions, which I commend likewise to you. I never read what is written against me.

June 28.

A bright, beautiful day. Pass all the morning alone, on Goat Island and a smaller one, just on the western brink of the American Fall. What a lovely spot! Better than a church for me to-day. Go up the stone tower in the midst of the English Fall. It drives me frantic with excitement. In the afternoon, go over the suspension bridge to Table Rock, on the Canada side. It is the finest view of the English Fall. In every other particular the American side is preferable.

Niagara is too much for me; my nerves shake like a bridge of wire; a vague sense of terror and unrest haunts me all the time. My head swims and reels with the ceaseless motion of the water.

June 27.

June 28.

June 29.

I have seen so many water-falls to-day that my brain grows dizzy at the thought. And yet, a water-fall in a green quiet landscape is my great delight; when I see these streams revelling in their freedom, and sliding down the mountain-side, leaping and shouting, all life and gladness, I envy them their play and wish I could be their playmate.

June 30.

A lovely drive, through Malden, round the lake, with its green, well-wooded slopes and flowery lawns. We drove about for a while at random, but at length overtook the party. We then struck across through the woodlands, a road having been cut through, but not made, — leaving us the fresh turf to walk on, — and came to an old mill; where we had our dinner under the trees, within sound of the falling water. We drove back through Medford just at sunset.

June 29.

June 30.

Craigie House, from the North.

July

July 1.

I throw myself more into books than ever; for they never fail me or disappoint me. They find me sadly seated, summer long, in the hot, dusty city, but they bring me green fields and flowers that never fade; dear friends that never desert me, unchanging, unchanged.

A volume of poems ought never to be large. Real estate on Mount Parnassus should be sold by the foot, not by the acre.

A story or a poem should be neither too short nor too long; it should be enough to satisfy, but not enough to satiate. I have always aimed to have my books small.

July 2.

A warm delicious day, but waxing rather too like the dog-days. A dog's day it was to me, paying tradesman's bills and the like, from morning till night. But in the evening came coolness and some consolation. And then we sat on the piazza and enjoyed the freshness of the air from the marshes. And so came on the ambrosial night, and I was happy

At last an east wind! Welcome a thousand times!

Came down to Nahant for the summer, — everything as of old. A lovely afternoon, the air perfect and most delightful.

July 1.

July 2.

July 3.

Nahant. This Mountford cottage boasts one of the finest situations in Nahant. It is on the southern point, and right above the ocean. From this little room in the attic I look over the broad Atlantic, with nothing between me and England; and the rush of rising tides and the ceaseless wash of the sea is heard by day and night.

This sea is a never-ending delight. I sat on the piazza and read the Birds of Aristophanes, in Cary's translation, which I am afraid is not very good. In the evening, fireworks from the hotel, which rises on the cliff, with its glimmering lights like a distant town on a hill. In contrast with these feverish earthly fires, gleamed serenely above, the whole firmament of stars, and the sea moaned and rushed along the shore below us.

July 4.

Nahant. A beautiful sunset. Through the purple and crimson vapors comes the mingling clang of the bells of Lynn, and the thunder of cannon from the forts in the harbor. Later, we sit on the seaward veranda and see the fireworks all along the horizon, gleaming and disappearing like fire-flies; while the steady old lighthouses hold up their lanterns, — the street lamps along the highways of the sea.

July 3.

July 4.

July 5.

DEAR YOUTH, — How are you this hot day? *We* are sitting in cool white, waiting for a cold dinner with a salad. Why cannot some invisible breath of air waft to you our wishes, that you might come in to take a glass of iced claret with us? Our wishes are so fervent sometimes that they seem to have the power of lifting a man from the ground, as the fervor of the old saint did, and transporting him bodily through the air. I should not therefore be surprised if you came.

July 6.

We get away for Nahant and reach our cottage on the South Shore. We have our boats right under our windows; the house is pleasant, and I hope for a hot and happy summer.

A delightful day. I look from this chamber window over the sea. The tide is low, and the purple dulse is lovely, lying in the shallow water like patches of heather. The boys are busy on the shore with their boats, getting ready for great nautical expeditions.

A true summer morning, warm and breezy. F. sat under the linden-tree and read to me Heine's poems, while I lay on a hay-cock; and C., red as a clover blossom, ran to and fro and into all possible mischief.

July 5.

July 6.

July 7.

Newport. Here we are, in the clover-fields on the cliff, at Hazard's house; near the beach, with the glorious sea unrolling its changing billows before us.

Portland. Strolled down the town with my father. Old familiar faces of grocers and shopkeepers that I knew when a boy. I already feel the effects of the sea air, stealing over me with its drowsiness and oblivious spell, — the song and breath of the Sirens.

July 8.

There is a splendid comet in the north, near the Great Bear.

Still, the fervent sunshine and heat, with a south wind fanning in at the window.

I hope you are enjoying the summer weather as much as I am. I should be deliciously idle, were it not for the incessant letter-writing forced upon me. That embitters my existence, and I suppose will to the end. I mean now to have an amanuensis, and only sign my name. I must come to it, though it is almost as bad as using spectacles, which I have not yet come to.

July 7.

July 8.

July 9.

Switzerland. The Rhone glacier is "lying like a glove with its palm downward, and the fingers crooked and close, — a gauntlet of ice which centuries ago Winter threw down in defiance to the Sun."

There is very little snow on the mountains, and the Jungfrau looks wrinkled, and brown, and old. Nevertheless, there is no disappointment in Switzerland. It outbids the imagination with its grandeurs and perpetual surprises.

July 10.

A cold northeast storm. It is fine to look out upon this dismal sea, with the fringe of foam round every rock, and on the shore the kale and sea-weed, —

> The coral and sea fan and tangle
> The blooms and the palms of the ocean.

The sermon was not edifying to-day. But the sea was, heaving in at sunset with stupendous billows on the eastern shore.

The sea is calm; — its surface broken by the flapping of innumerable fishes. It sounds like a heavy rain.

Soft sea gales fan the air, and cool the heat of the sun.

July 9.

July 10.

July 11.

England is to me a beloved "mother country," for which I have a strong affection. I often wonder if any of my kith and kin are still living there. I have never heard of any. I fear I should have to hunt for my name in grave-yards only and not on the hospitable doors of houses.

As I was dressing this morning, I watched a bark beating up the harbor, very near the shore. I saw her go about, and thought of my first sea voyage, when I used to watch this manœuvre with so much interest. Ah me, thirty years ago, when I sailed for France, so full of youth and hope and enthusiasm.

July 12.

What pleases me most in the negro is his *bonhomie*. The good-natured ebony face, the swarthy-bearded lip, the white teeth, the whole aspect of the man so striking and withal so wild, — it seemed as if some Egyptian statue had come to life and sat speaking in the twilight sonorous English not yet well learned.

A drive through Malden and Lynn to Marblehead. Drove across the beautiful sand. What a delicious scene! The ocean in the sunshine, changing from the silvery hue of the thin waves upon the beach, through the lighter and deeper green to a rich purple on the horizon.

July 11.

July 12.

July 13.

Our wedding-day. Three years of married life; and each year an added grace, and a new charm, and increase of affection. But these things refuse to be recorded, or expressed in words. Let me dream of them, and meditate upon them.

Ah, these melancholy anniversaries! [his wedding day and his wife's funeral.] I was awakened this morning about sunrise by the singing of a bird inside my room. I looked up and saw it perched on the window-blind. It then hopped into the room, — a little yellow bird with brown wings. After singing awhile, it perched on the rounds of a chair, then flew out of the other window.

July 14.

In the morning I sat by a lovely western window opposite the dark mysterious mountain, and tried to pour from my dreamy brain a thought or two upon paper — with small success. Then we walked down a pleasant lane, and through the woods, to a little lake, very deep and dark.

Walked down a lovely little valley, with a brown brook threading it, and a silent mill, to the seashore; a charming, secluded nook.

July 13.

July 14.

July 15.

We have a cottage directly upon the shore. From this window I could throw a stone into the tide which is now rising with a roar. There is nothing between me and England but the Atlantic. We see the steamers go by. And if the world were not round, and Ireland were not in the way, and my eyes were good enough, I could look directly up the Solway Frith, and perhaps see you standing at the door.

There was a beautiful wedding to-day; the chimes ringing, as if Cambridge were still a village. This and the lovely summer weather made a very pleasant occasion. One repeats over again in one's heart the old vows, and is married anew.

Politics, like wicked weeds, will spring up whenever and wherever one strikes a spade in.

July 16.

Sat on the piazza, or rather piazetta, looking seaward, a charming view. Juices of poppy seemed to distil upon my brain. Oh, how dull I was! Drove back through the moonlight. Afar over the sea beautifully rose the moon, and we saw boats and sails in the broad silver sheet of water.

July 15.

July 16.

July 17.

A delicious day. Sat all the morning on a promontory covered with wild roses, looking seaward, with F. What a delightful morning!

Went to the same place again, and planned a house with balconies overlooking the water. Mused and rambled about, and came home by way of the village.

Well, one must be on the alert or the days will escape him here by the sea.

July 18.

The difference between a man of genius seen in his works and in person, is like that of a light-house seen by night and by day, — in the one case only a great fiery brain, in the other only a white tower.

Translating the first line in the Divine Comedy is like making the first move in a game of chess; nearly every one does it in the same way.

July 17.

July 18.

July 19.

Nahant is very solitary and deserted this year. I stood looking down at the steamboat-landing opposite. Not a fishing-boat; not a human being in sight. Then the ghostly little steamer comes in, and the phantoms go over the hill toward the ruins of the burned hotel, and all is still and lonely again.

Afternoon hazy and hot. A bath, and a soft hazy evening, with a copper moon, rayless and ominous, hanging over the motionless sea.

July 20.

Life at Nahant partakes of the monotony of the sea. The walk along the shore, the surf, the rocks, the sails that embellish the water, books and friendly chat, — these make up the agreeable round.

Nothing can be pleasanter than our Nahant cottage, — sheltered, but near the sea.

A soft rain falling all day long, and all day long I read The Marble Faun. A wonderful book; but with the old, dull pain in it that runs through all Hawthorne's writings.

July 19.

July 20.

July 21.

Newport. To-day is very hot. How can I work? If I shut the window-blinds, — darkness! If I open them, — glare! Chamber-maids clattering about; children crying; and everything sticky except postage-stamps, — which, having stuck all together like a swarm of bees, refuse to do further duty. Such is the state of affairs this morning.

July 22.

We drove to Stockbridge, by the Lenox lake. The air embalmed with mint and clover. Passed an hour at the Ox-bow. What a lovely place! On three sides shut in by willow and alder hedges and the flowing wall of the river; groves clear of all underbrush; rocky knolls, and breezy bowers of chestnut; and under the soil, marble enough to build a palace. I build many castles in the air, and in fancy many on the earth; and one of these is on the uplands of the Ox-bow, looking eastward down the valley, across this silver Dian's bow of the Housatonic.

July 21.

July 22.

July 23.

He preached on conscience. I could not tell what he was driving at, except that he seemed desirous not to offend the congregation. He seemed to think conscience, on the whole, a very good thing; but that it was dangerous, on the whole, to act up to it. For my part, I maintain that there is no middle course.

July 24.

Pittsfield. Is it not a shame? a yawning gap of twenty days! Well, so goes my life. It seems to consist chiefly of gaps. It is all interruption, and no longer a peaceful flow.

Idleness gets possession of you the moment you arrive here and never lets go its hold as long as you stay. You loaf about in dell and hollow, and lie down on the hillside and let the slugs crawl over you without a shake. In the "broad orchards resonant with bees" you go to sleep, and only wake up when the horn blows for dinner. We know nothing of the weather in these parts.

"It may blow North, it still is warm,
Or South, it still is clear."

July 23.

July 24.

July 25.

We all took a stroll to the lake. The children paddled about, bare-footed, in the water; and we pushed off in a flat-bottomed boat, half-full of water, in pursuit of water-lilies. Then we had lunch on the pebbly shore. In the afternoon we drove to the Shaker village [at Lebanon]. Friend Nathan received us with distinguished kindness; showed us "some aged sisters" spinning, the washing and ironing rooms, the water-works, etc. One of the women took notice of little E.'s black eyes, and followed him to the door with a look of interest. Some ghost of the days gone by may suddenly have appeared to her.

July 26.

Beheld from my window the departure of travellers for the White Mountains: youths mounting upon the outside of coaches; damsels in brown linen sacks following; elderly gentlemen taking inside seats; small gloved hands extended from the windows; and "gentlemanly drivers" (as the coachmen are called in handbills) waiting for the last stroke of seven! How the generations of men repeat each other!

July 25.

July 26.

July 27.

This Portland is a beautiful place. The view from the eastern hill is particularly fine. There ought to be a summer hotel built there.

A monotonous life, broken only by night-watches by my father's bed. He sleeps for the most part. How quietly the morning breaks! And the birds sing in the streets, as if it were the country; one bird in particular, unknown save by its voice, which I have never elsewhere heard out of the woods.

July 28.

Portland. Took a long walk alone, round Munjoy and down to the old Fort Laurence, which as a boy of seven I helped to build, by rolling stones down the hill. I lay down in one of the embrasures and listened to the lashing, lulling sound of the sea just at my feet. It was a beautiful afternoon and the harbor was full of white sails coming and departing.

We crossed the fields on the soft warm turf among the pines, and climbed Granite Rock, a beautiful pile of granite, with a crown of pines, looking seaward.

July 27.

July 28.

July 29.

Idly busy days; days which leave no record in verse; no advance made in my long-neglected yet dearly loved Evangeline. The cares of the world choke the good seed. But these stones *must* be cleared away.

There are no critics who resemble the old Florentine judge, Lotto degli Agli; for he hung himself in despair for having pronounced an unjust sentence.

July 30.

Had a delicious bath with the boys. What if the sea-serpent had come in and made a Laocoön of me! I forgot to record the beauty of the sky last evening. Clouds came out of the sea, and piled themselves up into the shape of a stag with antlers thrown back, flying at full speed. Later, the moon rose, and lightning flashed from the cloud fortress, which had lost its resemblance to a stag. Looking eastward, it flashed behind you like a cloaked assassin brandishing his blade.

My mornings are glorious; and so are the evenings and nights. But the afternoons, the last three hours of the sun are inexpressibly gloomy.

July 29.

July 30.

July 31.

Still the roar of the breakers beyond the islands, like the continuous sound of wheels. On the shore, under the rocks and the overhanging trees near the bridge, is a spring of fresh water. It rises in its rocky basin and flows through the companion-way of a wrecked vessel, through which of yore, tossing on troubled seas or at anchor in some foreign haven, ascended odors of brandy and tobacco, strange sea-faring oaths and lewd songs, rough forms in coarse pea-jackets, and hearts heavy with danger or elate with gain. Now only coolness and the fresh pure waters of the spring, and the forms and faces of children reflected in the mimic cabin underneath.

July 31.

View across the Lawn, Northwest of Craigie House.

August

August 1.

Portland. Soft sea-gales fan the air, and cool the heat of the sun. In the afternoon drove to Martin's Point, the beautiful promontory north of the town, with its oak groves and fine sea views.

In the evening walked to the Cove. It was a delicious scene. The inverted green and purple shadows of the opposite shore deepened on one edge into the blacker hues of the woodlands and fields, and on the other softened into the silvery tints of the water. Two boats hung with idle sails in the midst of the cove. On the shore were boys bathing and playing. Suddenly over our heads we heard the sharp scream of a sea-bird, who threw himself heavily, with one wing broken, into the water, and struggling vainly to rise, was caught by the boys in one of the boats. The crowd on the shore welcomed his capture with the delight of young savages, running to and fro and yelling like little fiends.

August 2.

A foggy morning; and the lazy sea heaving in with a low wash, wash, on the rocks. The sun begins to break through the mist. There are few things so beautiful as the clearing of the fog. I will go down and watch it.

August 1.

August 2.

August 3.

Your working on so steadily through the hot weather fills me with wonder and envy. I cannot do it even here at the sea-side. In fact, I find that being by the sea is as bad as being *on* the sea, for any kind of intellectual work. It is a good place to read newspapers and Reviews; and that is about all. This year I brought down with me Plutarch's Morals, — a charming book for town or country. Here I cannot take the slightest interest in it. It seems prolix and ponderous.

Come and see if the briny atmosphere does not lay a wet cloth on your brain and cool it down to the average human speed. That is why I do not like to stay here so long. But in summer would it be different elsewhere? No; it is the season, not the place, after all.

August 4.

Delighted to behold the lovely sea again. Ah, why did we not pass the summer on its shores, instead of putting ourselves into the close custody of the imprisoning mountains? I prefer the sea-side to the country. The idea of liberty is stronger there.

Give me the sea-side in summer, and the town in winter.

August 3.

August 4.

August 5.

A great many people think that a translation ought not to be too faithful; that the writer should put *himself* into it as well as his original; that it should be Homer and Co., or Dante and Co.; and that what the foreign author really says should be falsified or modified, if thereby the smoothness of the verse can be improved. On the contrary I maintain — and am delighted that you agree with me — that a translator, like a witness on the stand, should hold up his right hand and swear to "tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." You, who all your life long have been fighting for the truth in all things, without fear or favor, could not, I am sure, think otherwise.

The business of a translator is to report what his author says, not to explain what he means; that is the work of the commentator. What an author says and how he says it, — that is the problem of the translator.

August 6.

Intermingled with the sound of the waves are the shouts and laughter of the bathers. The motion suggests a life-giving power, a healing, — as when the angel moved the stagnant pool of Bethesda.

August 5.

August 6.

August 7.

What discord should we bring into the universe if our prayers were all answered! Then *we* should govern the world, and not God. And do you think we should govern it better? It gives me only pain when I hear the long, wearisome petitions of men asking for they know not what. As frightened women clutch at the reins when there is danger, so do we grasp at God's government with our prayers. Thanksgiving with a full heart, — and the rest silence and submission to the Divine will!

Each new epoch of life seems an encounter. There is a tussle and a cloud of dust, and we come out of it triumphant or crest-fallen, according as we have borne ourselves.

August 8.

Nahant. The low wash of the sea very soothing. Last night was lovely, — a tropical night, with dreamy stars, and phosphorescent waves rolling up the beach.

We had a charming drive along the beach this afternoon. A phantom ship flashed back the setting sun, and seemed of pearl floating on a pearly sea. The whole scene was too lovely to be painted in words; and guarding it, lay, like a tawny lion, the brown, sunlighted island of Egg-Rock.

August 7.

August 8.

August 9.

A cold northeast storm. It is fine to look out upon this dismal sea, with the fringe of foam round every rock, and the wet gray sails struggling against the wind, and on the shore the kale and sea-weed, —

The coral and sea-fan and tangle, the blooms and the palms of the ocean.

Reading Ruskin's Stones of Venice. There is a certain magnetism about him, which, for the moment at least, makes all he says seem true, however bold his statements. In all his books there are hints which serve as divining-rods, and grand passages of rhetoric like Iliads in nutshells.

The mission of some people on earth is not that of the sunshine, but of the twilight, — the twilight, with its reveries, its reflections, its ghosts.

August 10.

Go to see the regatta. A pretty sight, — all those towering white sails in the distance; and then a slow and scattered flight, as of sea-birds, south toward Minot's Ledge.

The sultry, lazy sea has been very lovely all day long, — crowded with a phantom fleet, that hardly seemed to move; and the night is lovely with a large moon.

August 9.

August 10.

August 11.

At sunset walked on the bridge. Saw the fish leap out, and the screaming king-fishers shoot under the bridge and away seaward. The gurgling of the tide among the wooden piers was the only other sound. Coming back through the grove, we heard the evening gun from the fort; and the islands seized the sound and tossed it further and further off, till it died away in a murmur.

Your letter reached me yesterday; and I am glad to hear that you are surrounded with the pleasant sounds of building a home. Nest-building, ship-building, bridge-building, house-building, — all pleasant, though sometimes noisy!

August 12.

Portland. This harbor mouth is always a charming sight to me; the gateway of the sea. I took C. in to the circus. It did not amuse him. Coming out, a black kitten on a post, and a smith shoeing a horse, delighted him infinitely more. Children are most amused by the slightest things; they comprehend them most easily.

At the hotel. Standing in the office I hear the click! click! of the telegraph, and presently the clerk says, "The Atlantic Telegraph is laid!" Soon it buzzes through the corridors, and the whole house is alive with the news.

August 11.

August 12.

August 13.

From the foot of the hill, we climbed the rough wagon-way along the borders of the brook, catching glimpses of its waterfalls through the woods, and hearing the perpetual music of its murmur. The water is of a lively brown color, like Rhenish wine, — the Olympian wine spilled from the goblet of Hebe when she fell. We climbed as far as the mill, — a saw-mill, bringing to mind the little poem translated from the German by Bryant.

August 14.

Drove after tea, in the sunset; a lovely daylight and moonlight mingling. Walked on the bridge. A fat man fishing for cunners, and sundry sculpins giving up the ghost in the moon. We leaned for a while on the wooden rail, and enjoyed the silvery reflection on the sea, making sundry comparisons. Among other thoughts we had this cheering one, — that the whole sea was flashing with this heavenly light, though we saw it only in a single track; the dark waves are the dark providences of God; luminous, though not to us; and even to ourselves, in another position.

August 13.

August 14.

August 15.

There — the church-bells begin to ring. Shall I go, or stay? Do you know, I seldom stay at home from church without thinking of that pretty little poem of Goethe, where he says a truant boy was chased over field and through forest by a church-bell!

A lovely morning, without the glare of the sun. The sea in great commotion, chafing and foaming.

So from the bosom of darkness our days come roaring and gleaming,
Chafe and break into foam, sink into darkness again.
But on the shores of Time each leaves some trace of its passage,
Though the succeeding wave washes it out from the sand.

August 16.

Portland. At sunrise caught a glimpse of the fair city of my birth, rising beautifully in terraces above the sea, — the calm, solemn sea, that I have seen so often, and that Jean Paul longed to see once before he died. A glorious scene, with market boats rowing cityward, rocks, promontories, light-houses, forts, and wooded islands. We saw the city first over the land, and a rude man at my elbow said, "That 'ere hill takes off the heft of the city."

August 15.

August 16.

August 17.

Time passes rather idly; without study; reading now and then, and writing letters. We dine at one o'clock; then sit out-doors under the damson-trees, that form a bower. Therein is a bench, — part of a pew from the Old [First Parish] Church of yore. How many dull sermons that dull wood has heard! How many weary heads have rested upon the high, straight back! This bench and its fellows heard the wondrous eloquence of Parson Smith, when he "continued an hour and a half in prayer," and in his sermon "was all in a blaze." And now it stands under the plum-trees, and we sit upon it and smoke pipes after dinner. To such uses may church pews come at last!

August 18.

Again a misty morning; and again the sun-burst through it, with mellow sounds across the waveless, windless water. The morning, as usual, worm-eaten with the writing of letters.

Drove to Lynn. The sea magnificent, — flashing and foaming at every rocky point and headland, and rolling in huge billows of foam along the beach.

August 17.

August 18.

August 19.

The mist hangs in the sky, and the boats float in the calm water, with their reflections like a mirage. There is a low gurgle and rattle of the rising tide along the rocks. The sun illumines, without penetrating, the fog. I sit with the boys at the open chamber window; they are wearily plodding away at some Latin translation of Roman history, longing to be out of doors. The voices of F. and the children come up from the veranda below. The shadow of the mast of the Wyvern, C.'s boat, makes a long corkscrew in the water; she swerves with the tide, and now there are two corkscrews, that will soon uncork the school-room and let these effervescing spirits free.

August 20.

This building up life with solid blocks of idleness, as I do here, is a poor kind of architecture. I am getting tired of it.

Dip into the Greek Anthology; the most melancholy of books, with an odor of dead garlands about it. Voices from the grave, cymbals of Bacchantes, songs of love, sighs, groans, prayers, — all mingled together. I never read a book that made me sadder.

August 19.

August 20.

August 21.

Nahant. At length over the glorious beach we came, the surf mowing great swaths of foam along the sands, and the loveliest colors playing over the surface of the water, — from the silver shallows through the green middle space out to the blue of the far-off ocean.

Portland. We crossed the fields on the soft warm turf among the pines, and climbed Granite Rock (we called it, when we were boys, "Stony Mountain"). A beautiful pile of granite with a crown of pines, looking townward and seaward; a charming view, and a lovely spot for a picnic, as we all exclaimed. I have not been there since I was a boy.

August 22.

The rain, the welcome rain. How all the mountain-brooks are waking and leaping and shouting.

After a rainy night, the vapors begin to grow thinner, and a gurgle is heard on the beach. It is the rising tide.

I vapori umidi e spessi
A dirardar cominciansi, la spera
Del sol debilmente entra per essi.

So sings Dante; and the dead low tide, the slimy shore, and rocks covered with sea-weed, like huge, dishevelled heads, suggest the *morta gora* of the eighth canto of the *Inferno*, and Filippo Argenti *pien di fango* rising out of the water.

August 21.

August 22.

August 23.

One of the prettiest sights of Nahant is the cows going over the beach at sunset, from the cow-rights of Nahant to the cow-yards of Lynn. Their red hides and the reflection in the wet sand light up the gray picture of the sky and surge. Has it ever been painted?

One day here only repeats the day that went before. The record of one is the record of all. The sitting in the hall waiting for breakfast; the breakfast, the cigar, and the long chat on the door-step; the bath; the dinner; the after-dinner talk; the walk on the cliff at sunset; the watching for the moon at the eastern door; the talk before going to bed, — and the deep sleep of the airy night.

August 24.

A rainy day, with mist on the sea, through which the steamer blows its horn like a Triton's conch. The sea looks lifeless and heavy as lead; and the unused boats lie idle at their moorings. The rising tide begins to murmur along the rocks in long surges, sighing heavily. I sit, as wearily sighing, and answering letters.

It is impossible to do anything here in the way of writing. Such an empty house one's head becomes in this "land of drowsy-head."

August 23.

August 24.

August 25.

A charming party of children, wild with play among the hay-cocks; the seat of the old apple-tree turned into a fort; great scrambling for sugar-plums and the like; all ending with supper and a dance in the dining-room.

August 26.

Chamouni. It was here that I was most moved by the magnificence of Swiss scenery. The clouds that were hovering about on huge shadowy wings added to the magnificence. Before me lay the whole panorama of the Alps, — pine forests standing dark and solemn at their base, and half-way up a veil of mist from which the snowy summits looked forth, and above which rose here and there a sharp needle of rock which seemed floating in the air. The Mer de Glace wound up through the mountain valley like a great highway. Above all towered the dome-like summit of Mont Blanc. And ever and anon from the shroud of mist came the solemn sound of an avalanche, and a continual roar as of wind through a forest of pines filled the air. It was the Arve and Aveiron rushing from their icy fountains. And then the mists began to pass away, and it seemed as if the whole firmament were rolling together. And I recalled that sublime passage of the Apocalypse: "I saw a great white throne and Him that sat thereon, before whose face the heavens and the earth fled away and found no place."

August 25.

August 26.

August 27.

Lucerne. After dinner strolled through the town. The quaint style of building pleases me. Some of the houses are painted with strange figures. Some have three-sided windows projecting over the street, looking like crystals clinging to the wall. At night, when the lamps are lighted within, they resemble great lanterns.

August 28.

Passed the night in quiet sleep. No shaven crown, no cowled monk or veiled nun, appeared to me even in dream. The sun is shining brightly on the trees and vines of the garden, and far, far beyond, rises the Jungfrau with a veil of snow; and the Silberhorn, which is the Virgin's bosom, is pure and spotless. I like my dormitory very much. It is wainscoted, though not with oak; is on the lower floor; has a sofa, a chest of drawers, and a huge stove of painted tiles in the corner.

At noon we stopped at Langnau, and walked into the fields, and sat down by a stream of pure water that turned a mill; and a little girl came out of the mill and brought us cherries; and the shadow of the trees was pleasant, and my soul was filled with peace and gladness.

August 27.

August 28.

August 29.

Left Lucerne in a boat with four oars, and had a beautiful row up the lake, returning to Brunnen for the night. The day was cloudy and sad. But this lake is so beautiful! I think it the most picturesque of all the Swiss lakes. At Brunnen there is no watchman, but a watchwoman, who chants the hour with an invocation to the Virgin Mary. I got up at midnight and went out upon the balcony. It was perfectly quiet, save the sound of the water as it heaved up on the beach now and then, not in ripples but with a heavy beating, like the pulsation of some living thing. The stars were looking through the clouds, and in the mirror of the lake I could see the reflection of the great mountains opposite.

August 30.

Went to see the casting of pig-iron. Out of the glowing furnace it ran, a river of fire, into the long sand-mould, shaped like a comb, the bars being the teeth. We have a new guest, a commensal, from Iowa. He says that civilization advances westward about seventeen miles a year, preceded by the bees. When the Indians see the bees, they feel that they must be on the march, for the white men are coming.

August 29.

August 30.

August 31.

'T is the last day of summer. In the evening, read from Miss Edgeworth's Parent's Assistant to the children. How they bring back my own childhood, — these charming stories! How gently and quietly she inculcates the moral of her tale! and how unostentatious and beneficent the moral is! I cannot agree with those who find fault with them because they are not "religious" stories. "If," says Frisbie, "she had said, 'In the name of Jesus of Nazareth,' she would have worked miracles." I am not so sure of that. By trying to do too much, she might have failed of doing anything.

The last day of summer. Began my college work; classes unusually large. In the afternoon a delicious drive with F. and C. through Brookline, by the church and "the green lane," and homeward through a lovelier lane, with barberries and wild vines clustering over the old stone walls.

All safe again at home. How strange and how familiar it all seems! and how thankful I am to have brought my little flock back to the fold. The young voices and little feet are musical overhead, and the year of travel floats away, and dissolves like a Fata Morgana.

August 31.

VIEW FROM THE REAR PIAZZA, CRAIGIE HOUSE.

September

September 1.

The days grow shorter; the trees begin to scatter their curl-papers about the grass; there is a touch of autumn in the air; and the swift summer is gone.

Everything alive with sunshine, and the sea grinding its curved battle-axe on the beach.

To-day begins a new month; so *volta subito*, and turn over a new leaf.

September 2.

Cambridge. Once more the ever-welcome and ever-glorious autumn. On the trees are no longer leaves only, but brown fruits. On the bushes no longer blossoms, but clusters of red berries. And the wind has a rough manliness in its voice, — not the tone of a lover, but of a husband.

A glorious autumnal morning. I have, too, leisure to enjoy it. I could live very happily here if I could chain myself down to college duties and be nothing but a professor. I should then have work enough and recreation enough. But I am too restless for this. What should I be at fifty? A fat mill-horse, grinding round with blinkers on. But now, with my Meleager's firebrand, shall I reach fifty?

September 1.

September 2.

September 3.

A thunderstorm is now sailing up majestically from the southwest with almost unbroken volleys of thunder. The wind seems to be storming a cloud-redoubt in gallant style, and marches onward with dust, and green banners of the trees waving, and rattle of musketry, and occasional heavy cannonading, and an explosion like the blowing-up of a powder-wagon.

The south wind whistling through the keyhole, and roaring over the chimney.

September 4.

I have just been reading your very generous, and more than generous, article in the Atlantic. If it were not written about myself I should say it is beautifully done. As it is, I must say nothing of the kind, but only think it.

All this in a merely literary point of view. But the good-will, the sympathy, the tenderness of the article, I cannot make believe about those; nor can I adequately tell you how much I feel and value them. You will find out some day, when you are among the afternoon shadows, and hear the same call from some one who has the shadows still under his feet. Till then you must try to imagine it.

September 3.

September 4.

September 5.

Strolled on the Boulevards. What a throng! what a confusion of sounds! How marvellous it is to me, — the great and good providence of God, that holds in its hand all this varied world. Goethe makes one of his heroes say that whenever he lay down in the grass, and with his ear close to the ground listened to the continuous hum of the innumerable little world in the stubble, he comprehended better the omnipresence of the Deity, who made and preserved them all. With me, the feeling is stronger in the crowds of a great city. Pause and feel, if you can, that the beings around you are not the insects of a day, but human beings, each with his history, insignificant to us, to him all-important, — each with a heart whose fibres are woven into the great web of human sympathies, and none so small that when he dies some of the mysterious meshes are not broken, — follow out this train of thought and then say with me, "Field and forest and stream, the earth and the air and the countless myriads of living things that dwell therein, preach the gospel of God's providence; but more than all does man, the human creature, in his crowded cities."

September 6.

Warm, dreamy weather. Golden days, full of sadness and visions.

September 5.

September 6.

September 7.

I am lonely. When you come back, with your great soul brimful of wondrous impressions of that world to which "the streets of the sea" lead, my soul will rejoice at your coming and go out to meet you. They who have read in the same book understand each other better. You will reassure me of the reality of many things which are growing unreal in my imagination. Is it not glorious to see what a great and convenient world we live in! And to go sailing aloft over it all, looking down into the strange nests man has made for himself and called cities! Therefore, while you may, soar! revel in the sunshine and be glad. And, finally, if you have, like Edgar in Lear, a fancy "to curl your hair and wear gloves," — do it now, and not when you come back!

September 8.

Walked after breakfast to the top of the hill southward, with its fine view, the finest of all this region. Delightful deep shadows, and far-off gleams of sunshine flecking the landscape. The air sharp and arrowy; the first autumnal day.

A bright morning. The sea very calm, sending up along the rocks and beaches a long, low respiration.

September 7.

September 8.

September 9.

Portland. Rose early and walked before breakfast through the streets of the beautiful town, as far as Bramhall's hill, looking down upon Deering's Woods. Portland is

> The land of the Dacotahs,
> The land of handsome women.

A bevy of young damsels were at the station to bid farewell to a young bride. How pretty they were! so fresh, and healthy. After the train had started, the wildest of them ran along the platform and kissed the bride through the open window, saying, "I will have the last kiss."

Portland is a pleasant place. So are other places, — as may be seen by certain poems written about them. It is a pity that we cannot be in more than one at a time.

September 10.

Perhaps the worst thing in a college life is this having your mind constantly a playmate for boys, — constantly adapting itself to them, instead of stretching out and grappling with *men's* minds.

I have taken to the Greek poets again, and mean to devote one hour every morning to them. Began to-day with Anacreon. What exquisite language! Why did I ever forget my Greek?

September 9.

September 10.

September 11.

It begins again, the old pressure and squeeze of books and old routine, out of which I had escaped for a season. Well, it must be borne, I suppose. But I am so interrupted that my mind does not get into full play. Patience! there must be drawbacks in everything.

Thus slowly goes on the work. Well or ill, I must work right on, and wait for no happier moments. This is a glorious autumn day. The coat of arms of the dying year hangs on the forest wall, — as the coat of arms on the walls of a nobleman's house in England, when he dies.

September 12.

The Americans are not thrifty, but spendthrifty.

A great sorrow, like a mariner's quadrant, brings the sun at noon down to the horizon, and we learn where we are on the sea of life.

Rather cheerless is the aspect of our early history. The stern old puritanical character rises above the common level of life; it has a breezy air about its summits, but they are bleak and forbidding.

In youth all doors open outward; in old age they all open inward.

September 11.

September 12.

September 13.

Splendid are these autumnal mornings.

More splendid weather than yesterday. I cannot sit still; but must walk, walk, walk, — or be out in the air. Drove through the lanes of Watertown in the autumnal splendors.

I never saw a more beautiful rising of the moon. It came up round and large, through smoke-colored sea-mists, from which fell on the sea a great circle of light. We watched it late, R. singing German songs. Far away to the north, lightning was playing in the clouds. On the afternoon drive I had seen it on the white crests, like flashes of anger heightening the color in a face.

September 14.

Here is a gloomy [newspaper] paragraph for you. See what barbarism may exist in the midst of culture and civilization! "The last of the Paddock elms fell at a quarter past nine o'clock yesterday morning, and there are now no signs left of the old trees, except the smoothly cut stumps, which are on a level with the sidewalk." Paddock, who planted these elms, was a Tory in the days of the Revolution. Could that have had anything to do with it? I know not.

September 13.

September 14.

September 15.

The scene was perfectly quiet; a breathless stillness as if all Nature were at prayer; and, as ——— said, the trees looked as if they were standing up in their pews to sing. The waters of the Rhine were of a most lovely green. Nothing in the colors of human art could equal their beauty.

September 16.

September 16, 1870.

We returned yesterday from Nahant all in good condition, sailing up the harbor in a yacht in the lovely September day. Entering the old house again was like coming back from Europe. I had a kind of dazed feeling, a kind of familiar, unfamiliar sense of place. But in the evening one of my most intimate bores came in, saying, "I did not know that you had got back, but thought I would come up and see." So he came up and saw, and — I knew that I was in Cambridge.

This fact was still further confirmed to-day; for immediately after breakfast came one of my crazy women, and I had no sooner disposed of her than there appeared another bore, who occasionally frequents these forests, — huge, Hyrcanian, hopeless! There can be no doubt of the fact, I am certainly in Cambridge.

September 15.

September 16.

September 17.

The sea is all alive, and dashes and roars and drags the pebbles down. The sunset lovely, — the large white moon reddening in the purple twilight. Walk on the cliff.

The leaves are already touched with bronze, and the sunny afternoons are sad. In the evening we go up and sit on the bench at the brow of the hill, and see the moon on the water, and the little bay like an axe grinding its edge on the pebbly shore. To-night the sea has a peculiar musical moan, an unbroken roar like a cataract.

LEAVES.

Red leaves! dead leaves! that from the forest-trees,
Cradled in air a moment, fall and die,
Or float upon the surface of a brook, —
O Songs of mine! what are ye more than these?
What are ye more than Autumn leaves that lie
Gathered and pressed together in a book?

September 18.

In the evening, we had a tremendous gale from the south. Broken branches from the old trees were flying about in all directions. Down came a dead tree, crashing in the darkness. Blinds got loose, and banged about like mad. Anon, the wind lulled, and with one great expiring blast exhaled its soul.

September 17.

September 18.

September 19.

A glorious day. Could not stay at home, but went alone to Fresh Pond. What a lovely lake it is, with the forest hanging round it, — like a mirror with a garland of oak-leaves! Took a boat and floated away, rocked in dreams.

I am in despair at the swift flight of time, and the utter impossibility I feel to lay hold upon anything permanent. All my hours and days go to perishable things. College takes half the time; and other people, with their interminable letters and poems and requests and demands, take the rest. I have hardly a moment to think of my own writings, and am cheated of some of life's fairest hours. This is the extreme of folly; and if I knew a man, far off in some foreign land, doing as I do here, I should say he was mad.

September 20.

Drove in the afternoon to "Vaucluse," on the eastern shore of the island, some five miles from Newport. Altogether a striking picture was the quaint, antique house, the neglected garden, the shadows of great trees, and the handsome woman at the door.

We are accustomed to say, "How dear books are!" Yet how could I have purchased so much pleasure for the same money to-day? Books are in fact the cheapest of all our pleasures.

September 19.

September 20.

September 21.

A glorious morning, resplendent with sunshine and glistening dew and golden leaves.

Oh, lovely autumn mornings and evenings in the library! Ever fresh delight, as I see through the windows the gold of the sunshine on the darkening foliage, the gleaming of the firelight on the backs of books!

September 22.

After dinner we drove to Marblehead, — a strange old place on a rocky promontory, with narrow streets, and strange, ugly houses scattered at random, corner-wise and every-wise, thrusting their shoulders into the streets and elbowing the passers out of their way. A dismantled fort looks out seaward. We rambled along the breastworks, which are now a public walk, and asked in vain for the reef of Norman's Woe, which is, nevertheless, in this neighborhood. On returning to Devereaux Farm, we sat on the rocks and listened to "the bellowing of the savage sea."

Marblehead has one old tradition, if no more, — "the Screeching Woman," brought in by pirates and murdered in the marshes back of the town; and now her poor ghost shrieks on gusty nights.

September 21.

September 22.

September 23.

In the evening, our souls panted for the southern landscapes, and for song; and we took Shelley, and were wafted on his wings far up and far away. There are certain moods which his poetry meets and satisfies more than any other.

Drove home to Cambridge. The children ran about in a kind of strange, wild delight to see again the old familiar places. Ah, what a charming house they have to come back to! And what delightful associations and memories they are unconsciously pressing in their hearts to be looked at hereafter!

We reached home to-day at sunset, and found Cambridge in all its beauty; not a leaf faded.

How glad I am to be at home! The quiet and rest are welcome after the surly sea.

September 24.

Sat awhile on the rocks, watching the splendors of the evening sky. After tea we sat on the piazza, watching the moon go down among the clouds over the sea. Home at eleven through the delicious moonlight. Not a sound on the air, not a foot-fall to break the stillness! Truly speaks Goethe, — "Night is the better part of day." Beautiful is now the harvest moon, set like a ruby in the horizon's ring.

September 23.

September 24.

September 25.

Agassiz dined with us, and was very pleasant. He says that whenever a road or a railway is opened in this country, there European weeds spring up. As we walked down to the viliage, he pointed out by the roadside a weed called by the Indians "the white man's foot," because it advances into the wilderness with the white settlers.

Another golden autumnal morning. Translated Anacreon's "Grasshopper," — an exquisite ode. A dream-day.

September 26.

On Tuesday we made our expedition to Minot's Ledge; it was every way pleasant and successful. We wished you could have been with us; but it was impossible to notify you in season. The lighthouse rises out of the sea like a beautiful stone cannon, mouth upward, belching forth only friendly fires. We went up into it, — even into the lantern itself, the glass of which (beautiful plate-glass) cost ten thousand dollars. I can believe this, having seen it, and knowing what telescopic lenses cost. The lantern will hold six people easily. Below are oil-jars large enough to hold the forty thieves.

September 25.

September 26.

September 27.

A bleak west wind, — the wind Mudjekeewis. Very disagreeable, with its dryness and dust. It drives me mad.

This is a glorious autumnal morning, like the winter mornings which used to shine into our parlor in the Piazza Madama.

September 28.

In the afternoon, went to make arrangements to see the great telescope. In the evening we all went to the Observatory and saw Neptune, — a weak, watery, distant planet; glorious belted Saturn, large as a moon; and Mars, blazing with light. We saw the jagged silver edge of the moon; and two stars, one red and one blue. What a beautiful telescope, turning slowly and noiselessly its immense bulk at the touch of a finger, to any point of the sky! Ah, if one had a *mind* so well balanced, and swinging on such noiseless hinges, one might easily sweep all the heaven of thought.

A driving storm from the south. Key-holes whistling and chimneys roaring.

Diffuseness is death, both to author and reader. That is the only canon of criticism in which I have full faith.

September 27.

September 28.

September 29.

Mr. Fields on Longfellow: "One of the most occupied of all our literary men and scholars, he yet finds time for the small courtesies of existence, — those minor attentions that are so often neglected. One day, seeing him employed in cutting something from a newspaper, I asked him what he was about. 'Oh,' said he, 'here is a little paragraph speaking kindly of our poor old friend Blank. You know he seldom gets a word of praise, poor fellow, nowadays; and thinking he might not chance to see this paper, I am snipping out the paragraph to mail to him this afternoon. I know that even these few lines of recognition will make him happy for hours, and I could not bear to think he might perhaps miss seeing these pleasant words so kindly expressed.'"

September 30.

A hot day, and a hair-splitting sermon. To me, a sermon is no sermon in which I cannot hear the heart beat.

Dr. M.'s house was struck by lightning last evening. What a ferocious visitor; bursting into the house so unceremoniously, yet ringing all the bells to announce his presence, and away again after shaking hands with the inmates and dancing wildly on the bell-wires. A kind of Robin Goodfellow, with his ho! ho! ho!

September 29.

September 30.

THE AVENUE.

October

October 1.

"Thirty days hath September," — and they are ended.

Here is the lovely October. A few scarlet and yellow leaves herald his coming; but as yet no poetic thoughts and fancies, which usually come with the red leaves.

Welcome, O brown October! like a monk with a drinking-horn, like a pilgrim in russet.

October! I always write that word with delight. The pen seems to take pleasure in it. It is the most poetical month of all. Will it bring me any songs this year?

October 2.

The leaves are just beginning to change; here and there a red flag hung out to show that the train of Autumn is approaching.

A wedding. The church crowded, and such lovely bridesmaids! a pleasant sight to see. Afterward a reception. I think the pleasantest wedding I ever attended, except my own. I like to go to weddings, and be married over again, as it were. It freshens one's feelings.

Delicious autumnal weather. The leaves begin to turn, and the creeper is blood-red among the lilacs and the hedges. Splendid autumn! But where are the songs it used to bring me?

October 1.

October 2.

October 3.

This term begins beautifully with me. My lectures come in the afternoon, so that I have all these golden autumnal mornings to myself. Believe me, I both enjoy and improve them. I have fairly cast anchor here, as in a safe harbor, drying my sails, and occasionally (as now, for instance) *dropping a line* out of the cabin windows to catch a friend. Life is sanctified by its uses!

As one grows older and children multiply, the time is broken up; and household cares usurp the place of poetic dreams and reveries. This is the reason men give up poetry, as women do music, after marriage.

October 4.

Oh, what glorious, glorious moonlight nights! I never beheld in Italy aught more passing fair. The river in the meadow in front of my house spreads out into a silver lake, and the black shadows lie upon the grass like engravings in a book. Autumn has written his rubric on the illuminated leaves. The wind turns them over and chants, like a friar.

If I write no poems, yet I indulge in many fair poetic dreams. When the dull, rainy November comes, I may put them into language. But plans, — ah! thousands float through my brain!

October 3.

October 4.

October 5.

A beautiful day it is; full of sunshine, and all the trees lighted like torches. A stranger called here to-day, to see Washington's Headquarters. He asked me if Shakespeare did not live somewhere about here. I told him I knew no such person in this neighborhood.[1]

[1] At another time, a man who came to the house in Portland to make some repairs, inquired "if a Mr. Shakespeare, or some such name, was not born there." It would appear that to some persons, as to Sir Topas, "a poet is — a poet."

October 6.

Rain at last, and it seems to enjoy itself greatly.

Rain; what will become of the red leaves?

The oft-repeated prayer, "we want rain," is answered. It is raining now, late at night; raining gently, — a most Christian rain. Calm and holy quiet is around, and thoughts of the departed, the ministering angels who so soon unfolded their immortal wings. How well they lived and died, — the holy ones!

I always write with pleasure the name of October. It is the loveliest month of the year, notwithstanding its tinge of melancholy.

October 5.

October 6.

October 7.

A warm bright day with open windows, and a fireless grate heaped with autumnal leaves that imitate a flame.

The seventh of October, and the thermometer in my study, with doors and windows open, at seventy-four! But out of doors the scene is splendid, and the house is walled about with bronze and gold.

A perfect autumn day. It is enough to sit still and look at it and admire its beauty, and not attempt to describe it, even in verse.

October 8.

It is an old saying that men laugh in many ways, but cry in only one. This is an excellent hint for an author to bear in mind.

We *know* that we are old before we *feel* it. The language of those around us betrays to us the secret. Life is a landscape without hedge or fence. We pass from one field to another, and see no boundary-line.

October 7.

October 8.

October 9.

Warm and splendid; all the fields and roads bordered with red and gold, like an illuminated missal.

The look-out from the library window is delightful; the yellow leaves, the festoons of crimson creepers! A drive through the secluded lane in Watertown, down cross-roads and alleys green, near Fresh Pond, and home again in the cool, sunless air. Beautiful these cross-roads are.

October 10.

The golden October mocks the money-market, and laughs at commercial distress. It maintains its state and splendor, though banks fail and merchants cease to pay. It scatters its golden currency with full hands, as if nothing had happened.

Sorrento. After a night of storm, a day of alternate cloud and sunshine. The sea blue, and across the sea Vesuvius, with his white plume of smoke flattened by the wind, and behind Vesuvius the Apennines covered with snow.

> "Even as the snow among the living rafters
> Upon the back of Italy congeals,
> Blown on and drifted by Sclavonian winds."

October 9.

October 10.

October 11.

The season in all its splendor. We drive to town and enjoy the air and the sunshine. Beacon Street is always beautiful in October, with its overhanging golden elms, and the balconies draped with crimson creepers.

We drive through the woods of Watertown, and enjoy the foliage and the red berries on the walls and the golden quinces in long hedgerows.

October 12.

Our little child was buried to-day. From her nursery, down the front stairs, through my study and into the library, she was borne in the arms of her old nurse. And thence, after the prayer, through the long halls to her coffin and her grave. For a long time, I sat by her alone in the darkened library. The twilight fell softly on her placid face and the white flowers she held in her little hands. In the deep silence, the bird sang from the hall, a sad strain, a melancholy requiem. It touched and soothed me.

A magnificent autumnal moonlight; tranquil, dewy, cool. And why is it that no poetic visions come to me? Or, rather, why do I find no words for those that come?

October 11.

October 12.

October 13.

So the little ones fade and fall, like blossoms wafted away by the wind! But the wind is the breath of God, and the falling blossoms perfume the air, and the remembrance of them is sweet and sacred.

In our greatest sorrows we must not forget that there is always some one who has a greater sorrow, or at all events a more recent one; and that may give us courage, though it cannot give us comfort.

October 14.

Lugano. Delightful it is to be once more in Italy. I already feel the fascination of the old Siren; and if it were later in the season I would not turn back. But it is really too pleasant here to think of going anywhere else. You remember this Hôtel du Parc, once a convent. The very chambermaids look like nuns, or the ghosts of nuns. The lapping of the water under the windows, and the view of lake and mountains, will make the "charges moderate," whatever they may be.

To make you more unhappy than you already are, I must not forget to mention a dish of fresh figs beside the inkstand as I write, and a boat with an awning, full in sight, waiting under a willow-tree to take us across the lake. It is such a surprise to me to be here that I enjoy it more than anything else we have seen.

October 13.

October 14.

October 15.

I wrote you last from Lugano. From that pleasant place we went to one still pleasanter, — namely, Cadenabbia on the Lake of Como. That was Italy! and as lovely as Italy can be when she tries. The climate is delicious; neither hot nor cold, but delightfully tempered with all the elements necessary to make a climate perfect. Not an insect to be seen or heard! and a gentle breath of air stirring up or down the lake all day long, — no more than a large fan would make. No carriage-road leads to Cadenabbia, — only a foot-way, along the borders of the lake, between it and many villas. It is directly opposite Bellagio, but is more beautiful and more desirable. It was very difficult to get away. Going there for one night, we stayed a week.

October 16.

Cadenabbia. This is a silent, sunny Sunday. Only the soft bells from the distant villages on the lake chiming awhile, then all is still again, save the birds singing in the woods; as when the organ ceases, but the choir sings on. It is Whitsunday.

October 15.

October 16.

October 17.

At Jenny Lind's first concert. Rain, pitiless rain. A crowd. She is very feminine and lovely. Her power is in her presence, which is magnetic, and takes her audience captive before she opens her lips. She sings like the morning star; clear, liquid, heavenly sounds.

October 18.

It is something to have such a place to date from as the Villa Nardi, Sorrento. Incessant oranges and lemons, and also incessant rains, — like an endless shower of lemonade ready iced by the snow on the Apennines.

The terrace of the Villa Nardi, hanging over the sea, is protected by a parapet breast-high, with frequent embrasures or openings with iron railings, like balconies. The parapet is adorned with painted busts of terra-cotta. A stairway of stone, partly under the terrace, partly on the face of the cliff, leads down to the beach; and from windows in the covered gallery painted terra-cotta heads lean out, as if enjoying the view and conversing together. I should like to note down their imaginary conversations.

October 17.

October 18.

October 19.

The weather has become enchanting. At sunrise this morning the lemon gardens about the house rang with the song of the birds. As the Scotch poet Dunbar says so poetically, —

"The sky was full of shoutings of the larks."

This is the loveliest of the lovely days by the sea. A white cloud hovers above Vesuvius, and the snow on the Apennines gleams with a rosy hue. A thin, tender thistle-down of cloud trailing along the mountains. Ah, me, how charming it was, and is, and ever will be!

October 20.

The whole valley of the lake full of the sound of bells and the songs of birds. After breakfast, a row; then reading till dinner. Cadenabbia is a handful of houses on the western shore, opposite Bellagio, its rival as a place of summer resort. No carriage-road leads to it, and there is no sound of wheels or hoofs to break the stillness. All round rise the beautiful green, folded hills. In the morning the cool north wind blows down the lake; in the afternoon the "Brera" springs up from the south.

October 19.

October 20.

October 21.

The glimmer of golden leaves in the sunshine; the lilac hedges, shot with the crimson creeper; the river writing its silver S in the meadow; everything without full of loveliness. A week of fine autumnal weather. How it has gone I know not. The thoughts that are in my brain and heart I cannot recall.

How the days whirl away! Each a white milestone, and we rush by with such speed that they look like gravestones.

Last night we had a wild tempest of wind and rain, shaking the windows like a maniac, and howling about the house fiercely. Slept late, fanned by its vampire wings.

> "Tramp, tramp, along the land they drive;
> Splash, splash, along the sea!"

So go the days of my life; and shall they not leave even footprints?

October 22.

Flying cloud-rack. At two o'clock I saw what I never saw before, — a rainbow above the sun, like a garland hung in the sky, not like the arch of a bridge.

In the evening see the half-moon sailing through broken clouds, white and black, like a ship making her way through fields of ice.

October 21.

October 22.

October 23.

Be of good cheer! The signs of the times are encouraging. "Bate not one jot of heart or hope."

It will cheer thousands of hearts to see you. And they need cheering, in these dark and dreary days. How near we are to show ourselves a degenerate race! Heaven avert the gloomy omens!

An ignoble Yankee is a very ignoble being.

October 24.

We are living at my old lodgings in Cambridge. All literary occupation is, however, suspended; I am as idle as a lord, and have some idea of what a man's life must be who can neither read nor write. I have taken to planting trees, and other rural occupations; and am altogether rather a useless individual.

When I see how much work you do, I am quite ashamed of my own idleness. In a city you could not, or would not, do half so much.

Another turn of the great wheel, another grind of the old mill! Ah, if I only grind out something that is really food and nourishment for the young minds about me! Then it is worth the while.

October 23.

October 24.

October 25.

How brief this chronicle is, even of my outward life. And of my inner life, not a word. If one were only sure that one's journal would never be seen by any one, and never get into print, how different the case would be! But death picks the locks of all portfolios, and throws the contents into the street for the public to scramble after.

October 26.

Mr. Norton relates that he once gently remonstrated with Mr. Longfellow for suffering an unworthy protégé to impose himself so long upon him; when he replied, with a humorous look, "Charles, who will be kind to him if I am not?" It may have been to one of these that the diary refers when, without mentioning any name, it records a day of distress, on which duty to himself obliged him to give pain to another. At this time, perhaps, it was that he learned, and wrote, that "A man's friends are oftener those who seek him than those whom he seeks."

October 25.

October 26.

October 27.

An hour or two ago I had the pleasure — the great and infrequent pleasure — of receiving a letter from you, who have the heart to answer my long letters by little short things which rather deserve the name of billets. Write closer. *Serrez vos rangs.* Crowd the words. Don't write as if you lived next door. And now open your heart and hold it open by the four corners while I pour into it "all thoughts, all passions, all delights" which fill my own.

Oh give *details* of thy life, dear friend! and not generalities, which nowise satisfy.

October 28.

The great event of this day has been a hard trot on the Judge's horse, — a tremendous animal, that shook my heart into my mouth at every step. Inhuman beast! In future I shall be more chary of my promises to ride with ladies.

October 27.

October 28.

October 29.

How splendidly Autumn begins to tread his wine-press! The creepers round the seat in the old apple-tree have assumed the shape of two magnificent bay horses, or red-bronze horses rather; the eyes being formed by hollows in the old trunk. I delighted in them for an hour to-day, pacing the veranda after the rain.

October 30.

I have often observed, amid a chorus of a hundred voices and the sound of a hundred instruments, — amid all this whirlwind of the vexed air, — that I could distinguish the melancholy vibration of a single string, touched by a finger. It had a mournful, sobbing sound. Thus, amid the splendor of a festival, — the rushing crowd and song and sounds of gladness and a thousand mingling emotions, — distinctly audible to the mind's ear are the pulsations of some melancholy chord of the heart touched by the finger of memory. And it has a mournful, sobbing sound.

October 29.

October 30.

October 31.

October ends with a delicious Indian-summer day. Drive with Fields to the old Red Horse Tavern in Sudbury, — alas, no longer an inn! A lovely valley; the winding road shaded by grand old oaks before the house. A rambling, tumble-down old building, two hundred years old; and till now in the family of the Howes, who have kept an inn for one hundred and seventy-five years. In the old time, it was a house of call for all travellers from Boston westward.

The end of the beautiful month of October. Ah, me! Why do no songs flit through my brain, as of old? It is a consolation to think that they come when least expected.

October 31.

THE STUDY, CRAIGIE HOUSE.

November

November 1.

Golden autumnal mornings! Bright shines the dewy sun; fresh and bracing is the air; crickets chirp in the grass; and *caw, caw,* sings the solitary distant crow.

The utility of many useful things is not at first very manifest, — as poetry, for instance. Yet its uses are as many and as sweet as those of adversity. When the first kettle boiled, who imagined the manifold uses of steam?

November 2.

A young critic is like a boy with a gun; he fires at every living thing he sees. He thinks only of his own skill, not of the pain he is giving.

Amusements are like specie-payments. We do not much care for them, if we know that we can have them; but we like to know they may be had.

November 1.

November 2.

November 3.

Out of my childhood rises in my memory the recollection of many things rather as poetic impressions than as prosaic facts. Such are the damp mornings of early spring, with the loud crowing of cocks and the cooing of pigeons on roofs of barns. Very distinct in connection with these are the indefinite longings incident to childhood; feelings of wonder and loneliness which I could not interpret and scarcely then took cognizance of. But they have remained in my mind.

November 4.

I get very tired of the routine of this life. The bright autumn weather draws me away from study, and the brown branches of the leafless trees are more beautiful than books. We lead but one life here on earth. We must make that beautiful. And to do this, health and elasticity of mind are needful; and whatever endangers or impedes these must be avoided.

The days come and the days go. Ah, if they were only self-registering thermometers!

Fame grows like a tree if it have the principle of growth in it; the accumulated dews of ages freshen its leaves.

November 3.

November 4.

November 5.

The most interesting books to me are the histories of individuals and individual minds; all autobiographies and the like. This is my favorite reading.

It is always painful to discover the limitations of a person's mind whom otherwise you like. Expecting to enter a well-stored room, you suddenly find the door walled up, and grope about, like Don Quixote looking for his library.

Perseverance is a great element of success. If you only knock long enough and loud enough at the gate, you are sure to wake up somebody.

November 6.

Men, indeed, have thrown a veil of mystery over this beautiful subject, and have made it difficult for the way-faring man to walk in the light and liberty of religion; and I am confident that human systems have done much to deaden the true spirit of devotion and to render religion merely speculative. Would it not be better for mankind if we should consider it as a cheerful and social companion; and not as a stern and chiding task-master, to whom we must cling at last through mere despair, because we have nothing else on earth to which we can cling?

November 5.

November 6.

November 7.

How I wish you could be with us! *Ach*, my beloved friend, when I one day sit with you in Italy again, with nothing on the snow-white table-cloth save bread still whiter, and fruit, and that most delicate wine, — in "beakers full of the warm South" will we pledge the happy present time, and those sorrows and disappointments which are our schoolmasters. And it shall be an overflow of heart under the light of evening lamps, which have so long beheld my countenance sorrowful and sad that they know not how it looks when gay.

November 8.

Did you ever, in a circus, see a man leap through a paper balloon, tearing his way before him, and falling into the arms of an associate? If you have, then have you some image faint and feeble of the manner in which my heart comes tearing through this letter (as you break the seal) to fall upon yours. Receive it gently; do not let it fall to the ground.

Genius is all-embracing. When at full speed on its winged courser, like the wild Arab, it stoops to pick up a pebble.

Style is the gait of the mind, and is as much a part of a man as his bodily gait is.

November 7.

November 8.

November 9.

The Indian summer still in its glory.

One of the loveliest mornings. There was rain in the night, and it is frozen on the veranda roofs in ferns and stars. The birds are singing as if they thought spring had come; the air is exhilarating.

I conceive that if religion is ever to benefit us, it must be incorporated with our feelings, and become in every degree identified with our happiness. And hence I love that view of Christianity which sets it in the light of a cheerful, kind-hearted friend, and which gives its thoughts a noble and a liberal turn.

November 10.

In the night, rain, rain, rain. A pleasant sound. Lying awake I mused thus: —

Pleasant it is to hear the sound of the rattling rain upon the roof,
Ceaselessly falling through the night from the clouds that pass so far aloof;
Pleasant it is to hear the sound of the village clock that strikes the hour,
Dropping its notes like drops of rain from the darksome belfry in the tower.

November 9.

November 10.

November 11.

Children are pleasant to see playing together. It is still pleasanter to have one alone. Then you become a confidant or father-confessor. Their young eyes are like the eyes of Apollo, seeing all things in a poetic light. Took a walk in the twilight, just as the stars were beginning to glow in the purple western sky. The village streets are paved with gold.

November 12.

I have always looked upon the writing of autobiography as a harmless occupation, and have never felt that it implied any excess of self-conceit in the writer. In the lives of most men there are many things which, if truthfully stated, partake of the nature of confessions, and tend rather to mortify than to flatter their self-conceit.

When we walk towards the sun of Truth, all shadows are cast behind us.

I have many opinions in Art and Literature which constantly recur to me in the tender guise of a sentiment. A clever dialectician can prove to me that I am wrong. I cannot answer him. I let the waves of argument roll on; but all the lilies rise again, and are beautiful as before.

November 11.

November 12.

November 13.

When I hear of a young man's death, I instinctively recall that touching picture of a father's grief, where David goes up to the "chamber over the gate" and weeps; and I hear the cry of his soul: "O Absalom, my son, my son!"

These are the sorrows to which all others are as nothing. They change us. We can never be again what we were before, though we may seem so to the eyes of others. But we know that a part of ourselves is gone, and cannot come back again. I will not attempt to console you, — that is useless; but I suffer with you, and share your affliction. Such ploughshares do not go over us for naught; they turn up the deepest parts of our natures, and make us more akin to all who have suffered.

November 14.

After all definitions and descriptions, there remains in every book a certain something which defies analysis, and is to it what expression is to the human face, — the best part of it, which cannot be given by words.

Nothing is more dangerous to an author than sudden success. The patience of genius is one of its most precious attributes.

November 13.

November 14.

November 15.

Some poets ought to be punished by the laws of the land for the contamination of their verses, — as Pheres, son of Medea, was stoned to death by the Corinthians for giving poisonous clothes to Creon's daughter.

Those poets who make vice beautiful with the beauty of their song are like the Byzantine artists who painted the Devil with a nimbus.

Each day is a branch of the Tree of Life laden heavily with fruit. If we lie down lazily beneath it, we may starve; but if we shake the branches, some of the fruit will fall for us.

November 16.

I am so little of a sportsman that I rank fox-hunting with bull-fighting, and think them equally detestable. You will perhaps smile at this; but I never lose an opportunity of entering my protest against all pleasures that spring from the pain of dumb animals.

November 15.

November 16.

November 17.

Greater splendor than ever; a perfect day, the air cool and delicious. Walked to Mr. Cushing's in Watertown, and saw his garden and his barns and little, meek Alderney cows; and so back in the misty twilight, with white fogs settling on the lowlands.

Ferber, in his Travels through Italy, has observed that "the stones employed in buildings, decorations, and pavings are hints of the nature of the neighboring hills and quarries." So an author's style, language, and illustrations are hints of his surroundings, his favorite pursuits and studies.

November 18.

Walked to town to hear old Dr. Beecher, the father of Mrs. Stowe. The Doctor is eighty years old, but still erect, with a strong, full voice, and a vigorous gesture. The sermon, however, was a little like that of the Archbishop of Granada which Gil Blas ventured to criticise. Some odd things he said; among others, that if our forefathers had not landed here this part of the country would never have been settled; had they gone to the richer lands of the South they would never afterward have come here. So Providence "presented them the land butt-end foremost."

November 17.

November 18.

November 19.

I was weak enough to ask —— to dine with us; and he came, and stayed all the afternoon, and to tea, — and did not go away till eleven at night! We all feel as if a huge garden-roller had gone over us. He has a fifty-ogre power of devouring time. Woe worth the day!

Before I was dressed this morning, a ring at the door-bell. It was —— again, come to know if I had received his note. The aspect of things grows serious. These early hours are precious. If they too are invaded, what will become of me?

November 20.

How helpless these Europeans seem, when they land here. They are like children who have always had everything done for them, and do not know how to help themselves.

The day of rest — the "truce of God" between contending cares — is over, and the world begins again to swing round with clash and clang, like the wings of a wind-mill. Grind, grind, grind!

Do as you please, gentlemen. Like a bird, as Victor Hugo says, I feel the branch bend under me, but — "*j'ai des ailes.*"

November 19.

November 20.

November 21.

Thanksgiving-day. We made no feast of it. T. dined quietly with us; and in the twilight I took a long, solitary walk under the fading daylight.

A holiday. I don't think I have much liking for them. The world seems to stand still.

Had the double windows put on, and cracks and crevices stopped; making the old house ready for winter, as at sea one would a ship for rough weather.

Thanksgiving-day. Bright, but dreary. The ground covered with snow, and the roads in the worst possible state.

November 22.

The cares and vexations of daily life, letters, and manifold interruptions, have driven away my poetic mood, of which I was making such diligent use and hoping so much.

It is my own fault, I know; and I seem to hear the words of Demosthenes: "How would you comport yourself in weightier concerns if you cannot turn off an impertinent babbler, but suffer the eternal trifler to walk over you without telling him, 'Another time, good sir; at present I am in haste!'"

November 21.

November 22.

November 23.

The château of Chillon is not so picturesque in reality as in the engravings. An old soldier stood sentinel on the drawbridge, with a pipe in his mouth instead of a musket on his shoulder. He presented arms, however, by taking the pipe from his mouth as we passed, and consigned us to an elderly woman who made her appearance with a great key in her hand. The terror of the description we read is overcharged. Chillon is the most delightful prison I was ever in. The principal dungeon is a large vault with handsome columns and a high-arched roof. The shimmer of the sunshine glances in at the grated windows, and the murmur of the lake has a pleasant sound.

November 24.

The passion for buying books must be one of the last to leave us. As to the *reading* of books, that is another matter. I am afraid that long ago I became an impatient reader. Perhaps I always was one. I early felt the despair that comes over the soul at the sight of a large library. I am very restless under the infliction of a diffuse style, and want everything said in as few words as possible.

Where are our painters? Why are they not steeped in this wondrous light? The mist, the leaves, the flash of the river, — all is mystical; a dream.

November 23.

November 24.

November 25.

"Their road led through a vast and desolate fen, saturated with all the moisture of thirteen counties, and overhung during the greater part of the year by a low gray mist, high above which rose, visible many miles, the magnificent tower of Ely."

I opened Macaulay's new volume at random two or three days ago, and the very first sentence that caught my eye was this description of the march of soldiery through the Lincolnshire fens. It was at a bookseller's counter; and I closed the book and went away with a picture and a poem in my mind, — a fine historic picture, framed in a single sentence; the word *Ely* a poem in itself, bringing back the monks, and King Canute sailing by with his knights and listening to their song.

November 26.

Longfellow agreed with his visitor in a dislike for the modern verse that makes sense subservient to sound, and turns poetry into an elaborate arrangement of ornate phrases. In response to a quotation on the question, from Macaulay, to the effect that literary style should not only be so clear that it can be understood, but so clear that it cannot be misunderstood, he said: "I like simplicity in all things, but above all in poetry."

November 25.

November 26.

November 27.

I thank you for the paragraph on Co-education. That is a difficult problem to solve. I know that life, like French poetry, is imperfect without the feminine rhyme. But I remember how much time I lost at the Academy, in my boyhood, looking across the schoolroom at the beautiful rhyme. Perhaps, after all, it was not time lost, but a part of my education. Of what woman was it said that "to know her was a liberal education," and who said it? Certainly there is something more in education than is set down in the school-books. Whittier has touched the point very poetically in that little lyric of his called "In School Days."

November 28.

And so here we are again safe and sound in the Craigie House, which had begun to grow vapory and hazy in the splendors of great towns across the sea. It is pleasant to get back to it, and yet sad. I do not know whether to laugh or cry.

A great part of the happiness of life consists not in fighting battles, but in avoiding them. A masterly retreat is in itself a victory.

November 27.

November 28.

November 29.

I began my letter in rain; I end it in sunshine. So may our lives end. I am touched by the words of kindness from unknown friends in England, which you send in your letter. I have been thinking of them this bright Sunday morning, and wondering if by any chance I shall ever see them face to face.

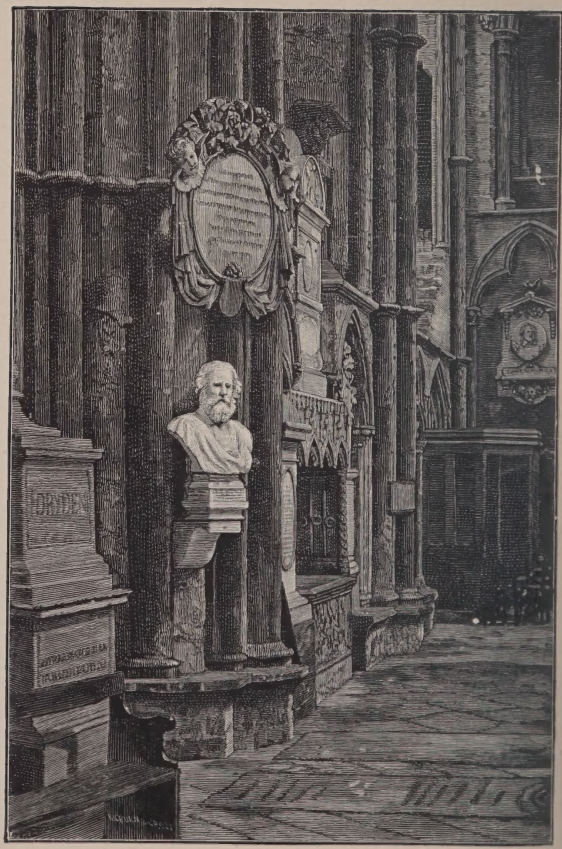
Every village has its great man, who represents nobility, who walks down the village street with a cane, and stands very erect as the stage-coach or the train passes, and thinks the passengers are all looking at him and saying to themselves, "Who can that remarkable-looking man be? Surely there must be good society in this place!"

November 30.

A handsome equipage drove by, with two white horses. It was the successful candidate, on his way already, rolling by triumphant; while the beaten candidate sat in the little way-side cottage, waiting for the public coach to take him to town. We had a good laugh at the theatrical scene, which might be represented on the stage with good effect.

November 29.

November 30



In the Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey.

December

December 1.

December begins with a warm, spring-like day. There is no snow, and there are buds on the honeysuckles.

Not cold, the air still and vapory, the bare trees standing motionless against the dull sky. Soft with mists, like Venice.

December 2.

A south wind, with a washing rain. How the chimneys whistle and roar, and great fluctuations of sound go over the roofs! In the night the shrieking gusts tore the window-blinds open, as if trying to house themselves and escape from the scourge of the "prince of the powers of the air." Pleasant in-doors, with books and conversation.

A beautiful holy morning within me. I was softly excited, I knew not why; and wrote with peace in my heart and not without tears in my eyes, "The Reaper and the Flowers, a Psalm of Death." I have had an idea of this kind in my mind for a long time, without finding any expression for it in words. This morning it seemed to crystallize at once, without any effort of my own. It would seem as if thoughts, like children, have their periods of gestation, and then are born whether we will or not.

December 1.

December 2.

December 3.

This cold weather is very disconsolate. Sitting at dinner yesterday, I thought of you, and wished we were both at Amalfi. I had a vision of sunshine and a sapphire sea, which sent the nimble Mercury up many rounds of his ladder in the thermometer.

If you wish to contemplate the virtuous man, think of me on an allowance of one cigar a day! But if you wish to see the just man made perfect, wait till I give up that one!

December 4.

Soft through the silent air descend the feathery
snow-flakes;
White are the distant hills, white are the neighboring fields;
Only the marshes are brown, and the river rolling
among them
Weareth the leaden hue seen in the eyes of the
blind.

The masked batteries of the clouds have opened upon us again to-day, and I write this under fire. The house leaks like a friend to whom you have confided an important secret; and altogether the aspect of things is lugubrious.

December 3.

December 4.

December 5.

To ——

. . . I have always a charming picture of you before my mind as a young wife busy with your household, or looking up from your book at the sound of an opening door and a well-known footstep, or putting on your shawl and walking over to your mother when some grand problem, difficult of solution, presents itself in the "celestial mechanics" of housekeeping.

Then I think of Schiller's beautiful description of the wife in his "Song of the Bell," and how the German women beautify and dignify their household cares, and how the American women do not, — which is a great pity and a great mistake; for life is very much what we make it, and if we call duty by the name of drudgery we degrade it. Is it not so? Or are you on the other side, taking part with our rebel American angels?

December 6.

If I go out I take cold; but then I must go out, — walk to Fresh Pond, or else up and down the piazza, like a prisoner on the wall of his prison. To-day, rain; the meadows are a lake, and the haycocks like clumsy ships afloat.

December 5.

December 6.

December 7.

The world is frozen; changed to stone by the cold, lovely, Medusa face of Night, in whose dark hair the stars gleamed and flashed like the eyes of serpents.

To-day we have a fall of snow, but without wind, — which makes the landscape beautiful. The trees are all in full blossom with snow-flakes.

December 8.

[With some autographs for a Fair.]

I send you half a dozen autographs, and would send you more if I were not ashamed. But I am ashamed. And so will you be, when you find you have more than are wanted.

But it is never too late to mend, — particularly a pen. So if you find *more* than half a dozen lunatics who are willing to take this paper currency, be kind enough to let me know it.

How charming it is to be able to help you in so good a cause by using my pen for a sword, and shedding the blue blood of my ink, instead of my own!

I know some persons object to giving their autographs; but if so little a thing will give pleasure, how can one refuse?

December 7.

December 8.

December 9.

It is the two W's — Work and Weather — that are playing the mischief with us.

You must not open a book; you must not even look at an inkstand. These are both contraband articles, upon which we have to pay heavy duties. We cannot smuggle them in; Nature's custom-house officers are too much on the alert.

I feel as if my brain were freezing to death. A kind of pleasant lethargy comes over me, and I hate to make any exertion beyond reading a pleasant book.

December 10.

I find no time to write. More and more the little things of life shut out the great. Innumerable interruptions — letters of application for this and for that; endless importunities of foreigners for help here and help there — fret the day and consume it.

In the evening, heard the Bell-Ringers, — a human *carillon!* They seemed to toss the sounds from one bell and catch them in another; and, half closing one's eyes and giving the reins to fancy, it was easy to imagine all the steeples in Belgium met together, and tossing the notes from their bells.

December 9.

December 10.

December 11.

A memorable day. A walk in a grove of pines; the gray cloud-rack overhead, and the russet pine-leaves under foot, and a friend by my side whose generous sympathy quieted me, and whose noble words strengthened and uplifted.

"Known and unknown; human, divine!
Sweet human hand and lips and eye,
Dear heavenly friend, who canst not die;
Mine, mine for ever; ever mine!"

December 12.

I looked out of the window just as the sun was rising, tingeing with a faint rosy blush the feathery snow on the trees, — a lovely glimpse.

The days pass in dull monotony, and having nothing to record, I record nothing. A newspaper, a novel, a vain attempt at more serious study, and weariness, — that is all. When the times have such a gunpowder flavor, all literature loses its taste. Newspapers are the only reading. They are at once the record and the romance of the day. I hardly know how these weary winter days creep along. Letters, talk with friends, walks through the snow; so one after another the heavy days are rolled over the horizon and disappear in the abyss.

December 11.

December 12.

December 13.

How I wish you were all here to see the new Paris since the war, and to enjoy the pictures and the lovely Tuileries garden! How pleasant it is to take one's nice bread and butter and *café au lait*, and an omelette such as only Paris prepares, and then go [into the garden] and read one's Galignani under the trees, with the children and birds all about, and the same old woman coming for her *sous!* And the weather is so soft and bright, and light with the same *légèreté* the people have, and which is perhaps the best thing about Paris.

The weather, which has been intensely cold, suddenly changes to rain; and avalanches of snow thunder from the college roofs all sermon-time.

December 14.

I agree with you entirely in what you say about translations. It is like running a ploughshare through the soil of one's mind; a thousand germs of thought start up (excuse this agricultural figure), which otherwise might have lain and rotted in the ground. Still, it sometimes seems to me like an excuse for being lazy, — like leaning on another man's shoulder.

December 13.

December 14.

December 15.

In the evening were repeated to me some of the Psalms, in Hebrew; strange, mysterious language, building up its poems with square blocks of sound. The same tongue in which Jeremiah prophesied, and David sang.

A pleasant day, notwithstanding the rain, — or rather, because of the rain.

Still, the imprisoning rain; but to-day welcome, thrice welcome. Sat by the fireside in the library.

A rainy day. What can be done with two noisy boys in vacation, when it rains?

December 16.

Gloomy and dark enough, with clouds of influenza and thunders of cough. It seems as if the world were at an end. So easily do we despair.

I have had rather a rough week of it, this last. One evening, finding my room oppressively hot, I opened the window to breathe, and in two minutes was shot through and through by the arrows of the heavenly maid, Influenza.

How few true *songs* we have in English! And here in America hardly any. Ah, here the heart struggles, and aspires, but does not sing!

December 15.

December 16.

December 17.

A cloudy day and gentle fall of snow. Such winter days have a peculiar charm; I like them better than the usual glare and glitter of the New England winter.

In the elder days of the church, when the Presbyter invested with his singing-robes the Psalmista, he said to him, "See that what thou singest with thy mouth thou believest also in thy heart; and that what thou believest in thy heart thou confirmest also in thy life."

December 18.

Instead of poetry, dull prose for lecture this morning. This college work is like a great hand laid on all the strings of my lyre, stopping their vibrations.

Evening, a grand ball. I have still floating through my brain that crowd of fair, slender girls, waving, like lilies on their stems, to the music as to a wind.

It was very elegant, a "dream of fair women" and light and music.

December 17.

December 18.

December 19.

This morning, in my walk before sunrise, I noted particularly the beauty of the amber eastern sky and the brown leafless branches against it.

Some sorrows are but footprints in the snow, which the genial sun effaces, or, if it does not wholly efface, changes into dimples.

December 20.

We almost froze in our beds last night; and to-day it is bitter cold.

A vigorous, cold day. Ah, how cold it is! My walk before sunrise I keep up very conscientiously, and because I really enjoy the fresh air. But to-day the wind scourged my ears sharply. These extremes of climate make me feel melancholy. Even when not cold myself I cannot help thinking how many others are so.

Nothing can be more splendid than these winter mornings before the sun is up. From my window I saw to-day the great oriflamme of dawn, blown by the morning wind, and in its field of gold a silver crescent and a silver star.

December 19.

December 20.

December 21.

Took a long walk before sunrise. The whole horizon tinted with rose. "An earth-surrounding hedge of roses." At the end of a long road, under the leafless arches of the elms, a bright blue patch of sky; the trees themselves more than ever like columns and ribbed ceilings of churches.

[In my morning walk] I see the red dawn encircling the horizon, and hear the thundering railway trains, radiating in various directions from the city along their sounding bars, like the bass of some great anthem, — our national anthem.

December 22.

A snowless winter, such as I like, — with brown, bare branches against purple skies morning and evening.

Another lovely day, like the finest Italian winter weather.

The weather to-day has been Roman weather, that takes all manliness out of a man; and to-night the south wind is pelting hail, rain, and sleet against my study-windows.

Passed the evening in the library. We were alone and undisturbed, and happy, very happy, reading and talking.

December 21.

December 22.

December 23.

I thank you very heartily, and this rather for the sympathy than the praise. There are so many persons who rush forward in front of one, and seizing one's Pegasus by the rein give him such a jerk as to make his mouth bleed, that I always feel grateful to any one who is willing to go a few paces side by side with me. I think you will agree with me that what a writer asks of his reader is not so much to *like* as to *listen*. You I have to thank for both.

December 24.

A strange, mild evening of moonlight and mud! But the morning walks are delightful. Then all is dry and clear. A pleasant sensation, too, is that of the early fire lighting up the study.

What a strange winter; as mild as May and as muddy as March. But such a mild air is a blessing in winter, who generally comes charging bayonet with all his icicles upon us poor trembling mortals.

This is a beautiful winter. I keep saying, "How like the North of Italy!"

December 23.

December 24

December 25.

I dislike to be alone at Christmas time. I feel as if I were an outcast from the world. The return of these annual holidays is the signal for bringing friends together, and uniting around the family fireside. Even the Italians — little as they have of true home-feeling about them — seem to feel this; and I find more than one wanderer turning his footsteps homeward to pass Christmas with his friends. They have a proverb, too

> Natale coi tuoi;
> Pasqua — dove puoi![1]

We went to town for Christmas. In the evening a child's party; we saw only the beginning of it. We came out in the murk and rain, the earth and sky dissolving, and passed a quiet evening, talking by the fireside.

[1] Christmas with your clan;
Easter — where you can!

December 26.

There are people in the world whom we like well enough when we are with them, but whom we never miss when they are gone. There are others whose absence is a positive pain. There are people whose society we enjoy for an hour, and never care to see again; others who cannot come too often, nor stay too long.

December 25.

December 26.

December 27.

Last night, as I lay awake thinking of many things, the number eighteen came into my mind, and I was amazed to find what a part it has played in my life.

I was eighteen years old when I took my college degree; eighteen years afterward, I was married for the second time; I lived with my wife eighteen years, and it is eighteen years since she died. These four eighteens added together make seventy-two, — my age this year. And then, by way of parenthesis or epicycle, I was eighteen years professor in the College here, and have published eighteen separate volumes of poems.

This is curious; the necromancers would make a good deal out of it: I cannot make anything at all.

December 28.

My library looks finely, with its [newly arrived] dark oaken cases. I take much delight therein, and keep it as a room consecrated to books and musings.

Enjoyed a day at home in the library. Very quiet and soothing In the afternoon, went to town.

December 27.

December 28.

December 29.

You do not know yet what it is to be seventy years old. I will tell you, so that you may not be taken by surprise when your turn comes. It is like climbing the Alps. You reach a snow-crowned summit, and see behind you the deep valley stretching miles and miles away, and before you other summits higher and whiter, which you may have strength to climb, or may not. Then you sit down and meditate and wonder which it will be. That is the whole story, amplify it as you may. All that one can say is, that life is opportunity.

December 30.

Death is neither an end nor a beginning. It is a transition, not from one existence to another, but from one state of existence to another. No link is broken in the chain of being, any more than in passing from infancy to manhood, from manhood to old age. . . . Death brings us again to our friends. They are waiting for us, and we shall not long delay. They have gone before us, and are like the angels in heaven. They stand upon the borders of the grave to welcome us, with the countenance of affection which they wore on earth, — yet more lovely, more radiant, more spiritual.

December 29.

December 30.

December 31.

And here comes the last day of the year; and the graybeard,

"Like Denmark's spectre king, with motion slow
Beckons the young year."

It certainly is a great pleasure to give pleasure to others, and particularly to those whom we wish to please. Though one may sing for the mere delight of singing, I think it increases the delight to know that the song has been heard and liked.

So closes the year. Peace to his ashes! Peace to the embers of burnt-out things; fears, anxieties, doubts, all gone! I see them now as a thin blue smoke, hanging in the bright heaven of the past year, vanishing away into utter nothingness. Not many hopes deceived, not many illusions scattered, not many anticipations disappointed; but love fulfilled, the heart comforted, the soul enriched with affection!

There is a strange, mysterious feeling at midnight of the old year. It is as if some one were dying in the darkness.

Shake hands, old friend; I have learned much from thee; and sung thy spring in prose and thy autumn in song. And now farewell!

December 31.

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